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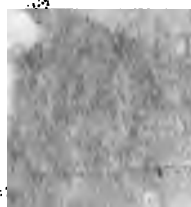
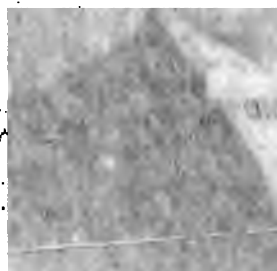
TELEGRAPHIC AND GENERAL PRESS.

By JOHN OAKUM.

NEW YORK:

JOHN OAKUM & CO. PUBLISHERS.

1876.



OAKUM PICKINGS:

A COLLECTION OF

Stories, Sketches, and Paragraphs

CONTRIBUTED FROM TIME TO TIME

TO THE TELEGRAPHIC AND GENERAL PRESS.

BY JOHN OAKUM,

"A SNAPPER-UP OF UNCONSIDERED TRIFLES"

Philippine, Western Polytechnic



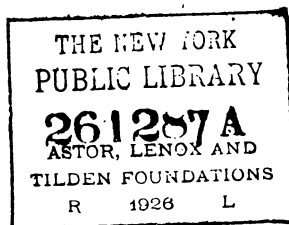
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A WORD IN ADVANCE.

THE following sketches having been thought to possess some merit, I have complied with a request, more generally made, perhaps, than the value of my work warrants, to publish them in book form. After such words of encouragement as I have received from different sections of the country, I can not doubt that the volume will be welcomed by the Telegraphers, with whom the best years of my life have been spent, and in whose hopes, joys, and fears I must essentially take a lively interest to the end. If the result shall prove that my book finds friends among general readers, I shall be more than pleased, and shall feel under deep obligations to such as may deem my unpretentious stories, chiefly affecting a class about which very little is known, worthy of their perusal and esteem.

The presence of an author's photograph in his first book seems to me to render an explanation in order. In justice to myself, I may properly say, therefore, that the engraving appears herein under protest. It was furnished because my publisher fancied it would be desirable to the hundreds of Telegraphers in remote cities, whose acquaintance I have made by wire during the past fifteen years, but whom I have never met face to face, and would thereby enhance the value of the book in their opinion. I am free to say that I do not approve of an author intruding his picture on his readers; but for once in my life I shall be very glad if my view of a matter is not generally sustained.

MAGUFFINSVILLE, August 15th, 1876.

W. Kelley 1 - July 17 20





CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
LOVE AND LIGHTNING	<u>7</u>
OLD JIM LAWLESS	<u>11</u>
THOMAS JOHNSON	<u>16</u>
LITTLE TIP McCLOSKEY	<u>21</u>
STAGE COACHING	<u>28</u>
POSIE VAN DUSEN	<u>41</u>
BLOCK ISLAND	<u>51</u>
BAD MEDICINE	<u>57</u>
THE BLOODLESS ONSLAUGHT	<u>64</u>

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
CAP. DE COSTA	68
UNCLE DANIEL	75
SUMMER RECREATION	83
THE BLUE AND THE GRAY	87
AN AUTUMN EPISODE	91
AN OLD MAN'S EXEGESIS	99
DEPARTED DAYS	106
MINOR PARAGRAPHS	119-176



OAKUM PICKINGS.

LOVE AND LIGHTNING.

C. GREGORY JONES had been courting a girl by wire for about three years, and had corresponded with her by mail until an engagement of marriage had been finally settled between them, "sight unseen," it being inconvenient for them to meet, on account of the distance, she being located some four hundred miles away from him.

"What could be expected when we note their common labors,
What when we consider that the two had long been neighbors,
Not so near that they had met, but near enough—'Tis true,
Little distances may lend enchantment to a view."

In the same office with Jones there worked a stylish youth by the name of John Birdsong, and so partial was the fair telegrapher to Jones that whenever he went to dinner, and she was compelled to work the wire with Birdsong, they invariably quarrelled about something or other, and became, in the course of time, as cordial enemies as she and Jones were friends. Birdsong lost no opportunity to wound her feelings, and she often told him that if she ever laid eyes on him she would tell him to his face what she

thought of him in such terse and vigorous English as to leave no doubt in his mind about the position he occupied in her estimation. Thus matters stood, when one day Jones attired himself in gorgeous plumage to go and see his own true love, and left on the evening train. He arrived in due time, and they were mutually pleased with each other. I will not stop to dwell on the subject of their billing and cooing—there was no end to it, it is safe to assume. But his furlough ran along like the wind, and all too soon came the sad hour of parting. He was to return by the midnight train, and they had long since closed the little office at the depot and adjourned to the old farm house—her father's residence—in the suburbs of the village. It was a beautiful moonlight night in the early September, and the scene out of doors upon which they had long been gazing, talking of their happiness and the prospect of quick coming nuptials, meantime, had wrought them up to the sublimest pitch of ecstatic bliss. You nor I, reader dear, will never know the half they said that night; no, indeed. As the last hour of Jones' stay was wearing on, the joy of his soul arose and lighted a lamp. She then went and brought from an adjoining room his natty light overcoat and glossy beaver. She sat the latter on the table while she assisted him on with his coat, her hands leaning lovingly on his

shoulders, and, then, while he was settling himself into his coat she went and took up the hat and stood looking into it, waiting to pass it to him. Her sweet face flushed, her eyes downcast, she looked almost heavenly in his eyes, and he said: "Ah! darling, you are more beautiful than Phyrne, and ——"

At that moment the hat sped across the room and she fell to attacking her lover in the choicest epithets of abuse that ever fell from a pretty woman's lips. He tried to soothe her, but she would not answer any questions, and Jones hearing his train whistle, and knowing he must positively return home that night, went and picked up the shako and ran mournfully to the depot, and she sat weeping as if her heart would break in the old room which had witnessed so many scenes of love and devotion between them. Probably no man was ever more wretched than Jones as the night express rumbled out of the quiet village and sped onward. But he was a philosophic young man, withal, so he went into the smoking car, lighted a cigar, and began to think the matter over. The more he thought about it, the more he was puzzled. He pictured her standing there, pretty and patient, holding his hat, and suddenly he said to himself: "I wonder if there is anything about that *hat* which disturbed the girl?" and he took it off and looked at it. It had a great dint on the side of

it, to be sure, but that wasn't there when she had it. Then he looked inside and he grew pale, for there in capital letters appeared the unhappy name—John Birdsong. It all came to him then ; he had borrowed Birdsong's new fall tile, at the last moment, to make his *tout ensemble* altogether irresistible, and he knew very well, Birdsong had often told her, when she and he had indulged in a difference, that if she didn't behave better he would come down some day, tell her he was Jones, and let her say "pretty things" to him.

I will not weary you with the details of the explanations which followed, or the conciliation afterward. Ours is an age in which people clamor for results, not means, so let me conclude by stating that Birdsong helped to bring the matter to a happy settlement, and finally stood up with Jones at the wedding in the same old parlor where his hat had gone skurrying from an angry hand. And if you ever pass Jones' house and see a five-year old boy swinging on a gate, who looks like his father and speaks like the echo of his mother's voice, bear in mind that your happy eye is resting on the figure of Master John Birdsong Jones.

OLD JIM LAWLESS.

[NOTE.—When the following sketch originally appeared, a young man in Boston inquired of a gentleman, who communicated the fact to me, if he had read, "Old Jim Lawless," and asked what he thought of it. Upon the latter replying that he had and appreciated the sketch, his interrogator stared at him in blank astonishment for a moment and then said: "Why, you must be as crazy as Oakum—it is the biggest lie I ever read." I doubt if there are many men in the country who will fail to see that my hero is a man of straw. I have merely given an actual episode or two in the life of a well-known "Rounder," and then proceeded to burlesque a style of talk which almost every operator has had to listen to some time in his life. I make mention of this for fear that there may be one other man somewhere as obtuse as our Boston friend, who might accuse me of being conspicuously inexact. Sometimes, when telegraphy is the topic of conversation, I am flattered to hear some one preface his remarks with: "Now, this is no Jim Lawless business." Again, I notice that there is a marked decrease in the sort of talk I have burlesqued, and, then, I feel that Jim Lawless has not lived in vain.]

Poor, old boy! the western pines wave over his grave now. He has been dead some time. I do not remember just what took him from us, but as he was "Jim" to everybody, and prone to go on "jams" in spite of all opposition, I have a suspicion that it was a combination of the two. He did not work at the business for several years prior to his decease; certain disturbances with telegraph managers and railroad

superintendents had rendered him unpopular with employers, and he had officiated in a Cheyenne restaurant—with bar attached—up to within a short time previous to his death. But neither in this field of enterprise was he entirely successful. On the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy, an attempt, while train dispatcher, to pass two trains on the same track, had worked his ruin. Dropping into a beery slumber, which lasted until daybreak, while he was attending a button repeater at Corinne, had resulted in a similar disaster. His troubles with trains and repeaters ended, however, when he quitted the service, and he thought he had gravitated to his level in the “hash and jig water business,” as he facetiously termed it, and he confidently looked forward to less turbulent scenes and experiences. But one day the proprietor, who had just refitted the saloon in gorgeous shape, went to Omaha, and left Jim “chief in charge.” The next day several kegs of new ale arrived, and Jim was busy all day getting them in. In the evening his friends found him unusually genial and generous, and they unanimously responded in person to his cheery invitation to “Drinkwymeboys, whasserods.” In attempting to tap one of the new arrivals the bung flew out of the keg, and for a moment the air was fragrant with its contents. All that new paper, the mirror and its

drapery of brocade and tassels, the pictures over the bar, and everything around wept tears of hops and malt. Jim gave the newly garnished room one sorrowful look, and it sobered him instantly. Then turning to his friends, he said: "Good-bye, boys, there goes another situation," and, like the "Tall Alcalde "

"He strode him out of the abode door,
And ne'er was seen or heard of more,"

by Cheyenne eyes or ears, at least. There was a legend floating about Red Buttes in 1870, which assigned him to the position of a water drawer for the railroad at a station near there; I can not vouch for the truth of it, but certain it is he dropped out of telegraphing some years ago, and died engaged in some lowlier pursuit than ours.

But Jim Lawless was the biggest kind of a telegrapher. I've seen the whole of them work; know them all by heart, and there never was a man who snatched brass that could touch him. I'll tell you what he did in Savannah, Ga. Old "Dad" Sullivan was in Charleston, and in those times "Dad" could average about eighty-three words a minute. He got Jim the first night Lawless struck the town, and Jim had been around the block, and was so drunk the boys had to prop him up in his chair; but he sat there and took three hundred and eleven

messages without a "break," besides a short "special" for the *Savannah News*. Sullivan did his level best. And the copy Jim took! gilt-edged, copperplate; couldn't be "rushed" out of it any how. And talk about copying behind! Why, that night when "Dad" said "N M—U'r no slouch.—G N.," old man Jim was three social messages, a Government "cypher," and the short "special" behind. The boys all stood around and watched him, and after he gave "O K" and signed, he went right on and copied out all that stuff he had laid back there in his head. Jim used to take "State Press" at Albany a long time ago, when they sent it abbreviated—E for "of the," "tt" for "that," "ts" for "this," etc. Most of the men took it by registers, but Jim just took it by sound, and wrote it out in full. The editors never saw such copy, and the proprietors of the paper offered him \$3,000 a year to take charge of their subscription books. One night when he was taking "State," Syracuse called up and wanted to know if he could deliver a message to the Chief of Police. Jim told him "yes," and took it, and told New York to go ahead. Then he jumped up and walked over to the police station, stopped into a little "dive" there is right there by the Delavan House, got a "schooner" and two "ponies" of beer, and came back to the office,

and he "sat in" and went to copying, and caught up to New York before he got "30," though he fell four hundred words behind while he was gone. These are only a few of the stories I can tell you about Jim Lawless, but these ought to suffice. I never encounter a crowd of operators but what some one will tune up about Hank Somebody, Sandy This, Nick That, and their appalling achievements, and as I know for a positive certainty that Jim Lawless was the best operator that ever struck a key, I can not refrain from giving one or two of his feats publicity.

THOMAS JOHNSON.

I SAW a statement the other day that a debating society in Syracuse has been discussing the question "how much quicker can a landlady's daughter find out if her mother's new lodger is married or single, than a colored barber can learn the name of a new patron." I am satisfied to leave this momentous question with the Syracusans for decision, but I beg to offer a remark or two which will show in an indirect way that I am in favor of the barber as against the landlady's daughter, confessing, however, that I know very little about the latter's methods or fertility of device in gaining information.

Some years ago, when a resident of an eastern city, where the colored barber is the rule instead of the exception, as in New York, where the German tonsor seems to have things pretty much his own way, I had many odd experiences, the history of one of which will give a sufficient idea of the many. I was a very young man in those days, and my beard existed chiefly in my imagination. However, I sought my barber with a great degree of punctuality, and paid out more money for razors, shaving cups, soap,

etc., than I think of doing now that I have more hair on my face than is comfortable or consistent with a clean appearance. But I believe it is a rule that an interest in shaving implements, particularly in gaudy cups, bay rum and the like, obtains in inverse order to our need for them, and that the young sprig—may I not say sprig of green—who had a private cup, a bottle of bay rum, a puff box, and a razor at half the principal shops in town at eighteen, generally ends by shaving around promiscuously in any cup that is handy, at thirty. How does your own experience compare with mine?

During that period of adolescence it was one of my greatest grievances, being naturally sensitive, and always feeling when I visited the shrine of lather and palaver as if I had about as much need for a barber's services as a cow has for a side-pocket, that I could not pass incognito. I transferred my patronage from one side of the town to the other with what would have been charming fickleness in a young lady, did that quintessence incarnate of all that is lovable avail herself of the offices of the tonsorial artist—and truth to tell she might do so and not be less rational than many of the youths who sit and wait a half hour for some particular barber in whom they have especial faith to "get around" to them and struggle with their

incipient beards. What troubled me was that by the time I made two visits to the same shop I was greeted, despite my reticence, by name, and the man and brother would immediately inquire, "How am de business down dar to de telegruf orfis," and make me so conspicuous that I sighed to take him kindly by the hand to some retired spot and kick the stuffing out of him. Of course, my cognomen boldly appearing on the cup was the means of my ebony friends' easy access to my name. But I could never divine, unless colored barbers learn the uses of the city directory from figuring out gigs and saddles on the fly leaves, how they get one's occupation down so fine in so short a time.

After I had shifted about a good deal, an idea struck me: I would get one more new cup, have some nonsensical thing painted on it, try a new shop, and see if I couldn't obtain a little rest from the uncomfortable notoriety I had thus far gained wherever I had appeared. Plantation bitters were all the rage at that time, and the seductive "S. T. 1860 X." was painted on all the dead walls, board fences, shelving rocks, and bill-boards in New England. In an evil moment I selected that as my future "sig," and had it inscribed on a china shaving mug that was altogether too gorgeous for me to half describe at this remote day. I took the cup to the

newly-selected saloon, a rather natty place on a suburban, though fruitful, street for hair dressers—Orange Street, in fact—and Saturday evening I put on a sub for an hour and sneaked up there. The shop was full, as is usual on the night preceding the peaceful New England Sabbath, when the click of the scissors and the jingle of the razor on the hone are hushed in the land. Among the many congregated were several personal friends who nodded “good evening,” and I sat down in a retired nook to wait my turn.

I finally fell into the hands of one Thomas Johnson, Esq., a negro whose make-up exceeded in point of gaudy exquisiteness anything that I have ever seen on the minstrel or any other stage. Tom was a great dandy, one of your swell chaps in dove-colored pantaloons, red satin vest and purple velvet coat, *the latter adorned with bugle trimming*, who fancied he was not only the apple of every dusky maiden’s eye who beheld him, but the bright particular star worshiped by all the white women who had once looked upon his wondrous mold of figure and sublime luxuriousness of “get up.” He was original, too, and when he spoke people always listened, for they were sure to hear something instructive. He was a character, was Tom; young, lively, conceited, and as imitative of a gentleman’s ways as a parrot is of human

speech. The shop was as still as a church as I sat down in his chair and he returned with my mug. As he walked over toward me he tossed the cup in the air, caught it on the fly, and stopping under the chandelier, looked quizzingly at the inscription "S. T. 1860 X." Everybody's eye was on him. I felt that a catastrophe was near at hand, but I was hardly prepared for the ejaculation, uttered with an unction which those who never knew Thomas Johnson can not half appreciate, "*Good nuf; how are you dis evening, Mr. Drake?*"

The shout that went up in that shop would have made the fortune of any minstrel troupe ever organized, and I—well, I never went there again. Subsequently I appeared under the engaging *nom-de-plume* of "Alonzo Hutchings" with annoying experiences that are hardly worth mentioning, however, after the episode above described, and the grace with which Mr. Johnson relegated me to my proper sphere among the nomenclature of names.

LITTLE TIP McCLOSKEY.

"You remember little, old Tip McClosky? He passed through here yesterday *en route* to Mexico. He has grown old since I saw him before, and they tell me he is a 'little off' on his working, and that the nice copy he used to put up has got to be a trifle rocky. Whisky has been playing fast and loose with his nerves, I fancy, and his palmiest days, telegraphically speaking, are over."

I extract the above from a private letter bearing date of New Orleans, March 6th, 1874. So little Tip has come to the surface again, after all these months in which his friends have been wondering if he was alive! Of course, I remember him. Everbody remembers him. Ten years ago it was no small affront to the telegraphic profession in general not to know Tip McClosky. Long before I had carried my last message and been promoted to the position of operator in a way office, I had learned the history of his achievements by heart. I should be almost ashamed to-day to tell you how much I revered that man long before I ever saw him. No rapt listener to the enchanting stories of "Sinbad," "Aladdin," or any of the others with which Scherezade beguiled the Ar-

abic ruler and his attendants through the fleeting hours of those one thousand and one nights, ever paid more faithful attention to the clever wife than I to those who made little Tip's exploits the burden of their song. I installed him in my boyish heart as a man fit to rank with Aramis or Athos, with Porthos or D'Artagan, and the genius of Dumas has not clothed the "Three Guardsmen" and their Gascon mate with braver laurels than those with which I crowned my hero, or attributed to them greater or more numerous virtues than those with which I formed a halo to crown Tip's curly head.

The worthy Mr. Tip was generally known as a man who never "broke," and he traveled, got trusted, borrowed money, and obtained new situations in spite of frequent dismissals, on this reputation. It was he who received Buchanan's message at Worcester, Mass. It came through a button repeater at Providence. Tip afterward made his boast that he was the only man in the New England States who took the whole message without a "break," and I think he was. The auburn haired operator who copied the message at Providence said that Worcester was accidentally cut off in the middle of that official document for fifteen minutes, and if Tip got the whole message he of the carrotty sconce was a clam, that's all. I will not discuss the

merit of this difference of opinion ; it is a trivial matter.

In Atlanta, Ga., Tip made a wager that he could walk from his instrument to the outside door, where he was to be met by a boy from a neighboring restaurant with a gin sour on a waiter, drink the "medicine," and resume his work without interrupting the sender—and he did it. The Atlanta paper said, in an editorial paragraph, two days later : " Our article of yesterday on the indiscretions of J. C. Lamont would have been characterized by less spirit had we known him to be a relative of the late Henry Clay. The Associated Press dispatch, on which our article was based, stated distinctly that Lamont was a nephew of old Dan Webster, of Massachusetts." The other papers in that locality, whose "press" was taken on the same wire, had it Henry Clay, but Tip's reputation saved him. There is no doubt in my mind that the rest of the men on that wire were a set of unmitigated plugs and guessers.

Tip worked the old National wire at New York in 1863. This was a great circuit in its day, and the amount of business sent *via* Pittsburg was enormous. Owing to an inordinate appetite for dramatic performances, he whiled the most of his evenings away at the Bowery Theater, and because of this, and a habit of in-

dulging in "revelry by night," after the entertainment, it was usually late before he sought his couch. As sleepiness is a natural sequence of unrest, and as ten or fifteen "horns" of beer a day do not conduce to wakefulness under these circumstances, Tip was generally drowsy; and whenever he was "clear" he laid his head on the table and went to sleep. The office boys, by whom he was regarded as a sort of demigod, manifested their interest in his welfare by always being on the alert for calls. When they heard Pittsburg calling they aroused Tip from his slumber. He would open the key, stare about sleepily for a moment, and then command his friend at "G" to "let 'em come and cut 'em all to bits." Then, to the admiration of all about, he would sit and copy message after message in a beautifully flowing chirography, oftentimes carrying on a lively conversation with his companions. And he *didn't "break" in seventeen months*. But there were bigoted citizens of New York who conspired against him. One illustration will suffice:

Dr. Janvier received a message from his wife stating that "Mr. Sage has caved and is satisfied." Now, I maintain that if Mr. Sage had caved he *ought* to have been satisfied. But not so with Janvier. He demanded a repetition, and the telegram read, "Message received and is satisfactory." I have no patience with your



modern Galens, and I never doubted for a moment that Janvier was prejudiced.

The occasion of the memorable Army of the Republic celebration in Boston, in 1868, found Tip a night operator at Titusville, Pa. It was on that night he demonstrated to a coterie of friends the feasibility of reciting "Casabianca" and receiving "press" simultaneously. The next morning the *Journal* announced in its telegraphic columns that "Post No. 1 was commanded by an Irishman from New Bedford;" and the New Bedford *Standard* hastened, a day or two later, to copy the dispatch, and explain that Post No. 1 was really commanded by A. N. Cushman, from New Bedford. It added, moreover, that Mr. Cushman was less a Milesian than the telegraph. This was evidently a fling at Tip's nationality, and I have never ceased to despise the carping nature of a newspaper that would make such an observation.

When the Pacific Railroad was opened Tip and Jim Lawless joined the numerous company who, pinning their faith on the star of empire, followed it across the Missouri, through the land of sage brush and alkali, and beyond the snow capped heights of the Sierras. I never heard of McClosky but twice during the whole western tour, and his sojourning on the Pacific coast. He was put off of a train, and came sauntering into the office at Wasatch, in Utah, one

morning, and depositing on the counter an old enamelled cloth satchel, tied up with a piece of line wire, he said to the operator: "Just you keep you eye skinned for that trunk, George, and I'll go out and lie down." The satchel was empty; that was obvious at the first glance. The operator tossed it on an adjacent shelf and went about his business. The budding season ripened into glorious summer, those delicious days when the sun is up early and goes not down till late, came and went, but Tip came not. One afternoon, however, when the grains and fruits were bending with their wealth, and all nature had grown magnificent in her abundant harvest, he swaggered jauntily from an eastern bound train, and called for his satchel with an air indicating that his absence had merely extended over an hour or two. He had not improved in personal appearance in the interval. A red shirt, a pair of jean pantaloons, an old felt hat, and a suspender long separated from its mate, constituted what

"Pledges of our fallen state"

adorned his person. He had been "down to 'Frisco," he said, "and had seen trouble." Slowly he unwound the line wire from his shabby satchel, cautiously he opened its widely gaping mouth, then plunging in his hand and feeling all around, he observed with considerable emphasis; "I should like to know the name

of the black-hearted Mormon who went through me for that red velvet vest." It was not without difficulty that he was persuaded to quit Wasatch ; and when he did shake the dust of that polygamous section from his honest shoes, he mentioned privately to the train dispatcher, as the train glided haughtily away, that probably he would find that "cylinder escapement" vest in Omaha. But my correspondent makes no mention of his wearing in New Orleans a garment resembling the ruby wine, so I fear he never found it. Perhaps he goes now to seek it in the land of the Montezumas.

STAGE COACHING.

It was a magnificent afternoon, when, on the occasion of my last visit to the White Mountains, the train which had borne us on through the beautiful Pemigewasset Valley, and over a tract of country unequalled in the world for its quiet grandeur and beauty, halted at Littleton. There was a grand debarking here, and each started for his particular destination by some one of the stage-coaches which ply between Littleton and the numerous summer resorts scattered among the mountains. With some twenty others I took passage on the stage destined for the Profile House, and was fortunate enough to secure a seat by the side of the driver. He proved to be a pleasant-mannered, old gentleman, with a clear gray eye which twinkled merrily whenever he spoke. He was quite intelligent, withal, and had that indescribable something about him which makes one feel when he encounters men of his kind that if accident had placed them in some higher walk in life they had within them the elements to adorn that higher plane, even as my friend adorned the box and lent dignity to the coach and four over which he presided. He was decidedly entertaining, and directed my attention

to different points in the landscape which had been rendered classic by what Edward Everett, Thomas Starr King, Bayard Taylor and others had written about them. And he informed me with a great deal of impressiveness when alluding to either of the gentlemen that "He was a man that had the sand in him." I had no definite idea of his meaning, but I did not see fit to question him as to the exact definition of the term. There are certain expressions met with quite often which are beyond the ken of the analyst, but which have a significance after all like Mr. Peggotty's, "Well, I'm gormed," and may properly be accepted unquestioned.

When we had driven down to the village of Franconia, my friend pointed out several features of the country which had been described, and gave me an outline of some of the originals of the characters figuring in a series of books called the "Beechnut Stories," which I remember, and many of my readers will remember, as a very amusing and instructive part of our early reading. After we left Franconia and began to climb the rugged hills which culminate in the mountains beyond, progress was not over rapid. My entertainer, therefore, at the end of a few miles had gone over New Hampshire matters pretty thoroughly, and for some time we rode on in silence. Then, with a

view evidently of finding a respectable peg on which to hang some further intelligence, he observed :

“I suppose you hail from New York way ?”

“No. From the interior of Massachusetts,” I answered.

“Now you don’t know how glad I am of that,” said he, gleefully. “I say, neighbor, you don’t know Judge P——, of Northampton, do you ?”

“Oh! yes, quite well by reputation, and I have met him personally once or twice in a professional capacity.”

“Well, I want to know! So you know the judge,” he went on. “He’s a pretty fair sort of a man, neighbor; a pretty goldarned sight of a man. He’s a man that has got the sand in him, or I’m a cow,” and he wagged his head sagely and seemed to be musing.

To all of this I assented, for the gentleman in question is one of the most eminent men in Massachusetts. I should have inquired into the relations existing between those two, so far apart in a social sense, and apparently with paths in life running in almost opposite directions, but my companion seemed to wish to change the subject, and so contenting myself with the thought that probably the judge came to the mountains often, and had been gracious to the old gentleman, I again re-

lapsed into silence. This had the effect of starting him off on a new subject, and he related the following:

"It must be nigh on to thirty years ago that I went down to New York to see an aunt of mine. I was a young man then, and the folks around the house wasn't the sociablest kind of critters I ever see, so I used to look around for something interesting, and among other places I went to was a police court on the same road she lived on, a little further to the west. There's a good deal of human nature to be seen and studied in a police court. It's a good place for a man to take his boy to, and let the youngster judge for himself whether the use of rum has a good effect on the system. It done me more good them few days I was there than all the temperance lectures I could ever have heard. Fellows brought up there in the morning, nice, respectable looking fellows too, and charged with being drunk and disorderly the night before. Very likely brought in from behind an ash barrel or something of that sort. The saddest sight of all were the women, some of 'em real bright-looking likely girls with faces as pretty as angels, but their showy clothes and a good deal of bogus jewelry gave a clue to how they came to fall, and indicated their bad occupation. One morning I remember there was among the prisoners a boy—a bootblack—

charged with stealing something or other. He had a bright brown eye and a way of speaking right out and looking you square in the face. I never believed he was guilty from the way he argued his own case and the way his eyes filled with tears when he told the judge that he was an orphan; he had been obliged to commence pretty low down in life, he knew, but he was trying to make an honest living and get some education, hoping sometime to be somebody, because his mother told him when she lay sick that she should watch over him and watch his career in life from her home in heaven. When he got to talking this way I just says to myself, 'That boy has got the sand in him,' and as I am a sinner I believe he had. I had hard work to keep from blarting right out like a calf right before the whole kit of 'em. The judge looked kinder hazy around the eye when he began to question the boy, and he went on and talked real handsome to him. He said he would look into the matter thoroughly, and if he found there was a mistake he would provide for him in his own office. And by grief that little chap spoke up as smart as a man, and said he, 'That ain't the usual practice of judges if I am rightly informed, but I appreciate your kindness and shall try to merit your esteem. The charge is as baseless as anything, and I am sure of the place you promise me.' And he

was, too, for the day afore I come away I dropped into the judge's law office, and there sot that boy reading a calfskin book with a quill pen behind his ear and feeling as big as Cuffy. And I heard from that boy after that, and he was admitted to the bar. I always had a good opinion of judges ever since that one there in New York acted so human like, and I'm glad to know that Judge P—— is one of the right sort. Them are the only two judges I ever knew, and they both had the sand in them."

I was greatly interested in this little story, homely though it was; there was a quiet earnestness about the speaker which made every word of importance. I expressed myself much pleased that an acquaintance so unpromisingly begun should have terminated so well for the youth, and tried to say something appropriate about judges exercising more discretion in their edicts in cases of juvenile misdemeanor or apparent depravity, with all of which my companion agreed. We had now reached a difficult point in the road which ran up the mountain-side at an angle, it seemed to me, of about eighty-nine degrees, and for half an hour neither of us spoke, but as the old gentleman gave the animals their bit as we came into a short space of flat country, he said:

"Somehow a court-room has always been an

attractive spot to me. I never get into Concord but what I have to go up to the court-house and see what is the matter. About ten years ago I was visiting a sister of mine who lives down in Rhode Island, at a little place called Greenville. There is nothing there but mills and factory people, with a farmer now and then, not very near together. I didn't particularly like around there, but the day before I came away I heard there was going to be a trial of a young man who had married a pretty hard case, for desertion and non-support. It was coming off before a country judge, a hard-headed old farmer, living about a mile from our place. I went over there the day it was down for. It was some kind of a State holiday, and the old farm-house was packed from the front room way back into the kitchen. There was lots of men, and more women than you'd think lived within a hundred miles. A young lawyer from Providence came out to argue the case for the woman, and the boy, who was pretty stuffy, had no lawyer and wouldn't get any. He'd just as soon go to jail, he said, and no one doubted he would have to go, either. There was great excitement while the lawyer was talking, and the women whispered and had a good deal to say among themselves that wasn't complimentary to the girl, but they rather favored her as agin the boy, and the old



judge was swallowing every word that the oily chap was saying. After a little, three young fellows with fishing-rods and tackle came riding along, and they stopped and came in. They were city bred; you could tell that easy enough; and there was a sensation as they took their seats in among the women, who made a place for 'em mighty quick. I was attracted to one of them before he had been there long, by the way he watched the lawyer, and a quick way he had of asking questions of the folks sitting near him. Pretty soon he took out a book and wrote down a few words now and then, and when the other chap sat down he jumped up as quick as a cat and made the politest bow to the judge, and smiled on everybody in the sweetest way and said, that as the defendant seemed to be without counsel, he would undertake, with the consent of the court and the approval of his colleague, to defend the youth. He added that though a stranger, he had just obtained permission to practice in the Rhode Island courts, and had set up an office in Providence. He was allowed to argue the case, and then there was a stir. I just rubbed my hands together, and says I, 'Here's a man that has got the sand in him!' and he had. Why he talked more law and said more things that made us laugh and then cry, than I could tell you in a week. He spoke of the wo-

man first, and said that a woman's reputation was like a fragile vase—the slightest blow ruined it forever. And then he spoke of the blessed influence of a good woman on a man's destiny, and pictured the comfort and holiness of home in such words that I shall never forget it. And then when the women were all crying slyly, he pointed out that in this case the woman was older than the husband, and said there was reason to believe that her path in life had not always been bounded with rectitude or truth. Instead of bringing a pure and faithful heart to her young and trusting husband, she had married him under false pretences, taking advantage of his youth and inexperience. She had disgraced his name and made him ashamed to be longer seen in public with her, and finally he had sought to escape by striking out a new path for himself and leaving her to go her way in peace—if she could. Oh, it was beautiful!" said the old man, cracking his whip as we came upon another level space; and though it was quite dark now, I fancied a tear was beaming in his eye, brought there by his own honest enthusiasm.

"That young man talked," he continued, "for an hour; and he might have talked for twenty-four, and no one would get tired. Before he had spoken fifteen minutes the old judge raised his spectacles up on to his fore-

head, and putting his chin in his hands, he never took his eyes off of him till he sat down. And when he did sit down there was a stillness all over that great house like that in a meeting-house when the minister spreads out his arms and says, "Now may the grace of our Lord and Saviour be with you all." I could hardly keep in my chair till the old judge got up, and then I arose with him. He wasn't a man of many words. He very deliberately said: 'In my opinion the indictment's squashed. The court has adjourned.' I couldn't hold in any longer; I yelled right out, 'Judge, you've got the sand in you, and no joking;' and that was the opinion of everybody. As for the young man, why, sir, they'd carried him on their shoulders if he'd let 'em, they were so glad he popped in as he did. They cheered him and shook hands with him, and he laughed and shook hands back, and everybody was as happy as kittens. I stood back watching his handsome face and figure, and thinking all the time I had seen him before, till he started to go out the door, and then as I wasn't going to lose my shake, I started after him. He was just trotting out of the yard as I overtook him trying to catch up with his friends, who had gone on a little ahead to unhitch the horse. I reached out my hand to him, and told him how glad I was he called around,

and then all of a sudden, he gave me a look, and I spoke right out and said I, 'Young man, I've seen you before somewhere's.' 'Well, I don't know,' says he, as fresh and gentlemanly as if I'd been the Governor of the State; 'I am from New York. Have you been there lately?' 'Not in a good many years. You must have been a boy when I was there, and a pretty small boy, too.' 'Well, if I was a very small boy, I was a bootblack. Who knows but I shined 'em up for you twenty good years ago?' and he laughed again and said he was quite proud to say that at an early age he had acquired a tolerable acquaintance with the difference between calfskin and cowhide by actual experience with both. I couldn't hardly catch my breath, I was so eager, but I choked down my heart that was all the time trying to crowd up into my mouth, and says I, 'Your name a'nt Henry P——?' and before I knew it he said it was; and then we shook hands again and again, and talked things over till his friends got so impatient he had to go, though he didn't want to. Well, well, welly! he's a judge now, God bless him, and I'm going to Northampton some day and see him. The sand in that man," he concluded impressively, "would sink a ship."

For a quarter of an hour we rode on in silence. No comment of mine could have added

a touch to the symmetry of the story; the wrong word would surely have jarred upon the old man's mind and hurt his feelings. I knew this, and therefore held my peace. But as we came on to the summit of the last hill-top and saw at our feet the brilliantly lighted Profile House, its great white surface standing out against the inky background formed by Mount Lafayette in most dazzling relief, I essayed to reopen the conversation on a new topic as we dashed along, and observed that I supposed there were a good many newspaper correspondents up here this season.

"Oh! yes," said he, "lots of 'em every season, and your speaking about 'em puts me in mind. Some of 'em have got the sand in 'em, but not many. There was one chap up here two summers ago," and here he broke out laughing till his hearty peals reverberated again and again among the ledges through which the road was cut. "He was up here," he continued, "two seasons ago. I didn't see him to know him, but I believe he came over the mountain from the Crawford House and then rode over to Littleton with me. His name was John—John Oakie—Oakum. John Oakum, that's the fellow. Well, I read a piece of his in the —— *Herald* about this country, and if he hasn't got the longest gas-pipe in him of any man I ever see, then I

don't know a whip-socket from an ear of green corn."

The road at about this point was very rocky, and the coach made a hideous noise, so I could not well discover my identity. Afterward I might have done so, but after all I am a modest man ; I don't care to have it bruited about who I am, when for the nonce I forget my proud eminence in life and am traveling incognito. It was for this reason, and for no other, I assure you, that I refrained from pressing my card on the old gentleman at parting.

POSIE VAN DUSEN.

I HAVE a remarkable memory for faces, and though it was ten good years ago that I first saw Posie Van Dusen, and I had never seen him, and had scarcely heard of him since, I recognized him instantly when I saw him again last fall.

I don't know why he is entitled "Posie." There is nothing about him suggesting the exhalation of flowers. His nose is the only blossoming feature about him, but I have no reason to think he derived his fragrant *sobriquet* from that. It must have been in the summer of 1863 or 1864 that I first saw Posie. It was the occasion of my first visit to New York. I was a boy then, in a New England office, with a very slight knowledge of dashes and dots, and having rendered a railroad superintendent a service, he offered me a pass to New York. My sensations on debarking in the wonderful metropolis were much, I fancy, as were yours, my reader. I was captivated with everything I saw, and was astounded with the length and breadth of the swarming island. To me at that time the poet's bitter denunciation—

'False land of promise, paved with gold
That turns to iron 'neath the blistering feet,
Lured by that rustic lie to pace her streets!
That loadstone rock whereon adventure splits
And wrecked ambition starves ;"

to me, I say, this had no unusual significance. I saw only the bright side of the picture, and I tripped gaily along the route of the telegraph poles, vainly expecting to reach the office by that means. When I had tired of this I used my tongue, and ere long I stood before the great "No. 145," of which I had heard and thought so much. My cousin was an operator, and, in due time, I was ushered into the operating-room of the American Company. He was in good standing ; he has since risen to a position of trust ; his name is identified now with the invention of "duplex" and "quads" innumerable, and I find him, moreover, despite his great modesty, a man whose knowledge of electrical science is generally respected. He introduced me to the manager, Mr. J. C. Hinchman, to Mr. M. S. Roberts, general assistant, to Mr. William Clum, chief operator, and to Mr. Dixon F. Marks, night manager, also to operators in considerable number ; and finally prefacing my presentation with the remark, "Of course you want to know all the celebrities," he brought me to where two young men, apparently cast in the Swivellerian mold,

were standing, and said: "This is Tip McClosky, Mr. Oakum, and this, Posie Van Dusen. You have heard of them both." Indeed, I had, and I felt much the same in their presence as I remember to have felt several years later, when I stood face to face with Charles Dickens, and tried to comprehend that he was the man who had created Cuttle, Copperfield, Agnes, Dame Durden, and the host whose hopes and experiences are a part of my own life—the sunniest part of it, need I add?

The next morning, as I stood waiting for the arrival of my *chaperone* and relative, who was not due until 8:30, I saw the little army of operators file into the side door. I was a little shaver, with a round, rosy face, like hundreds of other boys, and, I dare say, they did not recognize me. Certainly none of them honored me with a bow—not even with the ghost of a wink to betoken they had ever seen me before. I had not learned then how slight a claim a boy's introduction to a busy New Yorker entails. At the end of the list, as invariably happened, came Tip McClosky. His appearance, even in the distance, was dishevelled, but there was a devil-may-care air about him as he strutted along, which was not without its element of smartness. I turned my face away; I had been snubbed by everybody, and I would not give this man a chance to wound my foolish

sensibilities. But Tip accosted me with a kindness in his tones that I have never forgotten. He shook hands with me and called me his dear boy, and, leaning up against the little iron railing with as much *nonchalance* as if he had been fifteen minutes ahead of time, instead of fifteen behind, he proceeded to inquire how old I was, how long I had been learning, and assured me I was doing first rate.

"Stick to it, Oakey," said he, "it can't be accomplished with a *lep*, it requires patience and practice. Don't get discouraged, the war is creating a big demand for operators, and before it is over I shall expect to hear of you as one of the best operators around. And let me give you a little advice, my boy," he continued, quite seriously, "don't go too much on your reputation. I have got a big reputation myself, and I *must* sustain it. There is no such thing for me as starting anew, but you can learn wisdom from my experience. Try to become a good, reliable operator, steer clear of liquor, and you will win. And remember, above everything, that it is as impossible to do telegraphic work correctly, without occasional interrogation in doubtful instances, as it would be to print a book or newspaper correctly before the proof-reader improved it by his emendations."

With this he bade me "good-morning," and,



shaking hands, again he disappeared within. I walked on air that morning. All the encouragement I had ever felt was not a tenth of that which this seemingly abandoned Bohemian had voluntarily excited. Some one says that every man has the ashes of a poet in him. I am sure Tip McClosky, long wandering through this land, and now an exile in Mexico, has the ashes of a gentleman in him. What a pity that fortuitous circumstances, home influences, or an inherent will had not guided the warm instincts of his soul, and developed them into something worthier; how sad to contemplate a man wrecked on the waste waters of dissolution, from a mere lack of something to change his course!

But I am forgetting Van Dusen. Before I left New York I learned from Tip that Posie had been discharged. The story was a brief one. Van Dusen, Tip, and Cap De Costa, another telegraphic knight, had been up into Westchester County the week before to a ball. Van Dusen went to play the violin, on which he performed quite creditably, "though he got a message going to 14 Milk Street as 1470 K Street," said Tip, as he related the details. "Posie fiddled," said Tip, "as long as he could, and when he had become not only too full for utterance, but too full to scrape the strings, the people piled us into the wagon and started us home.

It was awfully dark, and most of us were asleep for a very long time: but Posie woke up at length and wanted me to stop the horse; said he thought his Cremona was knocking around in the bottom of the wagon. So I reigned in the steed, and Posie got out to make an examination. I went right to sleep, and I guess Cap wasn't awake at all. Anyway, we fetched up at the stable next morning, and Posie wasn't in. He says now that I drove off and left him in the woods twelve miles from Harlem. He was five days footing it into New York, and when he got here J. C. H. had his paper sealed, signed, and ready for delivery."

I wasn't as sorry as I ought to have been. I didn't like Van Dusen particularly. Perhaps I was prejudiced by Tip, whom I had once heard tell Posie, "Yes, you are a big operator—let you tell it."

Last summer I embarked for Boston by the Shore Line train, leaving Forty-second Street at nine P. M. There were not many in the cars—a young operator from Watertown, N. Y., going to New London to work for the opposition; a couple of dry goods drummers, one or two miscellaneous entities, and myself. Just as the train was starting, a chap whom I at once recognized as Van Dusen entered the car. He

was redolent of vinous compounds, and before we had fairly steamed into Harlem he had edged himself into the conversation proceeding between the two drummers. One of them had said something about his "circuit," and that was sufficient to set Van Dusen's tongue to running like mad. He worked the first wire that was ever worked from New Orleans to New York, he did; he took the first message that was ever sent across the plains—that's what kind of a man he was. But his auditors were not so much interested in telegraphics as they might have been, and they incontinently snubbed the man of dots and dashes, and he was obliged at last to address his conversation to the boy. After awhile he got a railroad flask, and he offered some of it to everybody. There were no takers except himself. He had talked shop just enough to raise the curiosity of the youngster from Watertown, and the lad came over and sat with him on the seat behind me. I couldn't help hearing much of what was said, and I thanked my stars when I began to feel drowsy just after leaving New Haven. The train, however, was a lightning express, and the abrupt curves and uneven track swayed the smoking car, and I woke up at intervals of ten or fifteen minutes, I should judge. By some singular fatality my waking moments

seemed to come just as Van Dusen was beginning to relate the history of some new adventure. As nearly as I can recall it, the panorama shifted after this manner :

“Sorry you won’t take a drink, young fellow. The whisky in this bottle is fourteen years old. I want to give you a little of my experience ; some heavy work I did in Cincinnati. I took fourteen thousand words of press ——”

Then I fell asleep and woke up to this refrain :

“Sorry you won’t take a drink, young fellow. The whisky in that bottle is sixteen years old. I want to give you a little of my experience—some heavy work I did in New Orleans. I took three hundred and thirty-one messages in two hours and a half ——”

Again, when the car disturbed my nap, I caught :

“Sorry you won’t take a drink, young fellow. The whisky in that bottle is eighteen years old. I want to give you a little of my experience—some heavy work I did in Corinne. Business had been accumulating in Omaha twelve days, Old Jim Lawless was working there then ; fastest sender ever lived. I just told him to leave out everything and go in. Received from him seventeen hours and thirty



seconds, and took sixteen hundred messages without a ——”

“Why, that is nearly a hundred an hour,” ejaculated the youngster, amazed.

“I don’t know anything about that. We never counted ’em to see what time we made,” said Posie, in return; and then I fell asleep again. I couldn’t pretend to tell you how many times I came to the surface, as it were, and heard the story about that aged whisky and the heavy work. The more he talked about them the older the whisky got, until its one hundred and fourteenth year was reached, and I don’t know how many more, and the work became heavier as the dust and cobwebs gathered upon that inspiring flask of spirits. Finally, I fell into a deep slumber, which lasted until the train went crashing through Hyde Park and Jamaica Plains. I looked behind me for Van Dusen as we came in sight of Boston’s domes, but he was gone, whither I knew not. It was a beautiful morning, and the birds were singing sweetly in the trees as I staggered across the Common more asleep than awake. Somehow there seemed to me to be a story of whisky and heavy work permeating the tones of the feathered songsters; but from away over on a hillside, where the branches were waving in the summer wind of the early morning, there

came the tones of a sweeter singer than all the rest. Above the din of the many its blithe notes rang out sharp and clear, and it seemed to sing—possibly I dreamed all this, but I remember it as a reality—it seemed to sing those lines of Young's:

“We rise in glory as we sink in pride,
Where boasting ends there dignity begins.”

BLOCK ISLAND.

I HAVE been on an excursion to Block Island, and I desire to tell you something about that sea-girt isle. I proceeded from Providence by steamer *Canonicus*, down the beautiful Narragansett Bay. The scenery along the shore is as fine as any in the world, and I enjoyed it hugely. After leaving Newport the *Canonicus* began to heave badly, as did also most of the passengers. Being an old salt myself, I didn't mind it. There was one other man on board who did not—a melancholy looking individual whose attire had hardly a shabby-genteel respectability. He seemed to take a good deal of interest in me, and, as he paced up and down the saloon, it became obvious to me that he had been "taking something warm." His breath was decidedly aromatic, as I noticed more particularly when he accosted me as follows :

"Isn't the swell charming? I was once a swell myself; but that was in the remote past, before I committed murder."

This was cheerful, to say the least; this standing face to face with an avowed murderer had something novel in it. I eyed the fellow askance, but he looked supernaturally grave; and I said :

"So you have committed murder? Does the ghost of your victim ever haunt you?"

"No, not now," he answered, "but it did for several years. I am a dentist by profession. After the murder I tried to continue my business, but every afternoon my victim came and sat by me. I struggled against his presence; I moved my business from one place to another; but all in vain. Finally, broken down in health, with flagging energies and my reason almost unseated, I sold out my office to a German, and came East. The ghost has never troubled me since."

"Then it was in the West where you perpetrated the crime?"

"Yes, in Silesia, Michigan. Silesia is a small town fifty miles from Detroit, a beautifully situated hamlet nestling among the soft-sloping hills of ——"

"Oh, let it nestle among the sloping hills," I impatiently broke out. To tell the truth, I don't think poetry and murder should be mixed indiscriminately. If some poetry is murderous, no murder is poetical, and I told him so. He admitted that I was correct, and at my solicitation, he narrated the terrible details of the affair. I give his story *verbatim* as told to me.

"It was mid-winter, 1857. I had not been doing any business for weeks. Every decayed

tooth in Silesia had been extracted, every toothless adult who could raise the money to pay for a false set had been supplied. One afternoon, as I sat smoking by the fire and praying inwardly for the advent of spring, which I knew would send me many customers from the farms back in the country, I heard a rap at the door, and crying out cheerily, 'Come in,' a tall, middle-aged man stepped into the room. He proceeded directly to business, as follows :

"'I am from over on the frontier. I've got a rattling bad tooth that has nigh drove me crazy these cold nights, and I want you to pull on it. I don't spect you can yank him, for a fellow over in Detroit has tried it and gin it over. But you can stir it up a little, p'raps, and I'll get a little comfort for awhile, any how.'

"I begged him to be seated, and went to work," continued the murderer, "but nothing came of my endeavors. I tried every instrument I had, every trick known to the profession ; but the only impression I could make was to lift him from his chair. I felt very bad to let him go off, but he insisted that I had done bravely, paid me five dollars, and said he would certainly call in the spring if the tooth troubled him again. It was the first time I had ever been balked, and I determined to draw his molar if he ever placed himself in my hands again. As

soon as he was gone, I went over to Jim Milliken's harness-shop and bought twenty feet of trace-leather, and on my way back I stopped into Sam Hancock's hardware-store and bought three pounds of screws, fifty feet of rope, and a small derrick-block. These I took to my office, and the next day I went to work with them. First I screwed my operating-chair to the floor. Then I arranged my trace-leather into a sort of harness, and procuring buckles from Milliken, I had that perfected in less than three days. Meanwhile, John Pettingill, blacksmith, happened in, and I told him to make me a strong staple for the ceiling. He had it done Saturday night, and having bought a windlass Friday afternoon, I worked diligently all day Sunday putting the pulleys, ropes, etc., in position. When this was done I felt prepared for any emergency, and went home. The next week came, and the next, but it brought not my friend from the frontier. Finally, one day in early March, when I had nearly given him up, he made his appearance. The snow lay thick upon the ground, the heavens were leaden in their aspect; in fact, winter was lingering in the lap ——"

"Oh, bosh!" I exclaimed. I had no patience with his maudlin sentimentality, and, moreover, I was getting interested in the story and wanted to get the *denouement*.

"Well," he continued, "the old fellow came in. I inquired if his tooth had ever troubled him since, and he said that it had. He had, in fact, come down to have it stirred up again. I seated him in the chair, harnessed him in, and got a pair of wrought steel pincers that I knew to be reliable, and hooked on to the tusk, Then I let down the rope, on the end of which was a vise—by the by," he said, glancing at a cigar I was smoking, "I have some small vices. Smoking is one of them ; give me a weed."

I gave him one, and admonished him that I was impatient for the *finale* of his narrative. He was several minutes getting lighted up, when he resumed by saying : "I fastened the vise on to the forceps, and took up my position behind him, where the windlass was. I let on about one horse power, and the only impression it made on him was to lift up his left foot. Every time I put on steam I noticed that his foot came up about ten inches, and when I eased up again it touched the floor. Then I went around and asked him how he felt. He said everything was all right. I again took my place at the windlass, and put on two-horse power the first thing. His left foot went up under the chair like a flash, but the molar came not. I put on three-horse power, but no result. Four-horse power, ditto. I was frantic, and in my excitement I jumped



!

the machine to its utmost capacity—ten-horse power—and the effect was electrical. I struck on the floor with a heavy thud which stunned me; but, quickly recovering, I rose to my feet and saw the whole at a glance. At the end of the rope hung a perfect skeleton, while in the chair, strapped tightly in, was my customer—that is, the meat part of him. He was actually boned, sir. Well, I investigated the skeleton, and found that the tooth was connected with the bones of the left leg and foot. My patient was dead; he had passed across the darksome river Styx—gone to that mysterious bourne ——”

I checked him here; I could stand no more. A smile crept over my features, but his countenance was as the grave.

“You believe that story,” he said, presently.

“Oh, yes,” I answered, “it is the most plausible and touching thing I ever heard.”

He took my hand in his clammy one and shook it savagely, asked for another cigar, and I have never seen him more.

“And what about Block Island,” do you ask? Really you could not expect me to speak of that after such a story as the foregoing. No, indeed.

BAD MEDICINE.

THOSE good old times when mischievous members of the fraternity amused themselves by sending "specials" from ostensibly distant points to their fellow operators in the same office, or worried some credulous brother by sending to him on the local from the battery-room, and continued to send despite the desperate efforts of the receiver to break—those happy days have flown forever. Your modern man of the key has long since "tumbled." There is no game to be got out of him, as a general thing, and the oft-repeated attempts to "guy" him "mit ter pack schtroke," or otherwise, in nearly every case end in bringing confusion on the perpetrator of the fraud. Many and ingenious are the jobs put up at the expense of novices and the absent-minded and unsuspecting "old 'uns;" but the only one of which I have knowledge, that has been carried out with much show of success, is embodied in the sending of a bogus message, having a wrong check, so worded that when the sender, commencing at the period, gives the letters, some indecorous phrase is spelled out, much to the astonishment and chagrin of the receiver,

and which enables him to see the joke instantly.

To illustrate this, for the benefit of those who have never been victimized, let me relate that, stepping into a Jew store on Chatham Street, a while ago, I bought the grandest looking vest I ever saw for a dollar. The circumcised villain measured me, and, referring to sundry tags sewed on the garment at divers points, assured me that it was made for his brother-in-law in Paris, and would "fit me like the baper on the vall." In the trusting innocence of my heart I bought the waistcoat, and so great is my faith in human nature that I didn't try it on until I reached home. Well, you ought to have seen it. Like the fiddle in Handy Andy's conundrum, "it was the shape of a turkey and the size of a goose," and it fitted me about as well as a soldier's overcoat would fit a barberry bush. The Israelite in attendance told me, when I called for satisfaction, that his brother "was died" last night. He alluded to the individual of whom I made the purchase, and I deeply sympathized with him in his bereavement, and went home in quite low spirits. With womanly shrewdness my wife harnessed the vest one day, and taking enough out of the back to make young Oakum two suits of home clothes, she returned it to me, saying she hoped I could make it go now, and get my money's



worth out of it at least. So, arter that, when I was unusually courageous, or got on a fit of despondency, and wanted all Broadway to think I was a mountebank retired to private life, or a three-card monte man revelling in the gay metropolis prior to his departure to Coney Island for the season, I lost myself in that gorgeous garment and groped over to the office. To say that my appearance elicited frequent and painful remarks from the operators about me would be but to faintly hint at the shower of slurs and innuendoes which my appearance, in connection with that vest, always provoked. It was on one of these occasions that I received the following message, sandwiched in between a half rate and a special, and checked seven words out of the way :

“Will Irving leave Lewistown? Young owes Unsworth. Every vessel expected remain. Smith has often ordered the things. He also transferred very early. Secure Thompson.”

The sender insisted there were thirty-one words, and, according to custom, went ahead period, when I found myself questioned as follows :

“Will you *ever* shoot that vest?”

By what means the interrogator, many miles distant, came to know of my magnificent article of apparel I leave to others to explain. Suffice it, that at this writing the cause of my trib-

ulations forms an important feature in a rag carpet adorning my mother-in law's back parlor. I am teaching all the vagabond boys in my neighborhood now to go down in front of that Chatham Street store and cry, "I sell sheep." Not that it does those precious Jews any harm, but it amuses the boys. I have no conscientious qualms about this either; for while it may be regarded as a pernicious habit, it has been productive of good results—my especial favorite, who "was died" last night, having been resuscitated to an extent enabling him to bound over the counter and get out on to the teeming thoroughfare in precisely seven seconds—which isn't slow for a dweller in that shady bourne from which no traveler returns. But, after all, the sending of those messages is no evidence of smartness. As long as they are sent to other people I enjoy them; but, somehow, I never can see the application of such things when my own dignity is involved.

Now, on the cable lines they have a much better way of making their little points; and it is really refreshing to note the way they do "fool" their best friends, and it is intensely funny, moreover, to observe how mad their best friends get about it. A few evenings since an attempt was made to send the appended message to Plaister Cove:

"Nicodemus 42½ siboletth wayland ecezerereous

oxford Tyndall lowgrade ziphoceriousophy can
 tab receicacerous licoriceroot evenciyelt ycoyo
 niy sampson *oudmass* sympathy lacking *hevens*
wotaful everything wrong in taking advantage
 our good nature *rublind* sigglecicity cicerone-
 ous verniedrunggesillschraft 48529 *odontucityet*
tumbleifuevercan——”

How would you like to struggle with that?
 Of course you wouldn't; no more did the brave
 Bostonian now working in Plaister Cove. He
 broke and broke; then he called for Cottrell,
 saying, “Cot can send those words to me so I
 can get 'em.” But when it was attempted he
 got wilder than before. It wasn't intended
 that he should “get it,” and he didn't. After
 half an hour's trying there was an exchange of
 compliments, and the two offices became in-
 tensely personal in their expressions of regard.
 “Gs” finally said “he would report the matter
 at headquarters.” Plaister Cove said “‘Gs’
 could report and be hanged. It might lose him
 his situation, but there was no help for it; he
 might guess at these words until Greenland
 froze over (it strikes me he said Greenland), and
 he couldn't get them unless they were spaced
 better.”

The matter ended there for the night, but
 next day “Gs” relieved the anxiety of the
 Plaister Cove man (who expected, every time
 he heard the cable-room call, that his discharge

was coming) by letting him into the joke, and assuaging his grief at the trick which had been played on him, by saying: "Never mind, Jack, we will come it on Duxbury to-night, and you may help us." It is a great relief to feel that some one is going to be victimized as badly as we have been—that is, human nature the world over; and so Jack came to think it was a pretty good joke after all, particularly as he was to assist at the coming slaughter.

The next night Boston was asked to put Duxbury and Plaister Cove on the same wire, as he is often asked to do nights, to facilitate the handling of the business by "Gs." The message given above was addressed to a well known house in Havre, and Leslie proceeded to give it to Duxbury at a moderate rate of speed, and with apparently the greatest care, but in reality mixing up the spaced letters in a manner fearfully artistic and puzzling. The Duxbury man "weakened" perceptibly. No one but those who "took it in" can imagine the degree of merriment the task of transmission elicited. It was never finished, and the upshot of the attempts in that direction was that the victim became as wild as his brother in Plaister Cove had been the night before, compliments and words of fraternal affection being in order, as usual. And if he was indignant before, fancy his boiling wrath when told that the

Duxbury men were a set of old grandmothers anyway, and that no trouble was ever experienced in getting business to Plaister Cove—to prove which the tormentor called the latter office and sent the message to Jack at a high rate of speed, the Duxbury man listening meanwhile, and wondering what had happened that he could no longer read what other men took with such facility. The key had hardly closed when “O. K. F.” came back sharp and clear, and “Gs” was happy. But the feelings of that Duxbury man, who had hitherto hugged the flattering unction to his soul that he could take anything in the way of dots and dashes that mortal man can take, I shall not attempt to describe. He has never “dropped,” and never will until he sees this, I presume, and then——

“Angels and ministers of grace defend us.”

I suspect his wrath toward “Gs” will vanish like the fabric of a dream in the presence of his devouring wish to punch the head of the chronicler of this episode.

THE BLOODLESS ONSLAUGHT.

IN the far-off realm of those good old times, when it was thought something smart to work telegraph lines, there was one Malloy in Washington City, a shrewd, sharp chap, exceedingly witty, who signed an "X," and often said, as he swelled and perspired and rolled his head, that he was about a mess for any New York gent, when business or press by him was sent. To send a message one spring-like day to T. L. Hawkins, 19 Broadway, this rusher did prepare, but as he finished Hawkins' name in at the switch his own chief came and said to New York, in his king-like way, "ans. on House," and the operator then went on to say, room No. 9, 19 Broadway.

Then, as now, you understand, a "none but known-ability" man was put upon the Washington lines, but as it happens oftentimes the mind of the receiver was gathering wool, running, perchance, on his days at school when on a similar spring-like day he played the truant and romped at play, or when, mayhaps, to the infinite joy of his fellows he pestered McLafferty's boy by dropping in his pocket a defunct



mouse, and thus preoccupied, as Anson House our hero chalked it down.

But he knew too well of the town the lay to put the Anson House at 19 Broadway, so a disclaimer offered with the usual deference, to the style of which there's no need of reference. The observation being tart, it naturally made Mr. Washington smart, and he hastened to say with a sly reflection that with Anson House Hawkins had no connection, and that, moreover, if New York was sane, he would know well enough he had given no name in the message like Anson House. Then quickly followed a mutual exchange of nice little compliments, a struggling for circuit, and the inevitable result—a *melange*. To have the last word was the settled intent of each of the boys, and much time was spent, while both seemed to forget that there languished that day, for a message, one Hawkins, at 19 Broadway.

But their converse was suddenly ended sometimes by the chief, whose voice, like the Trinity chimes, came in and inquired with great "catouse," why in thunder he wasn't answered on House? It was then that the jolly, red-cheeked Sam saw the point, and told the Washington man, to go ahead period, then and there, there was no sort of use for this tearing of hair, that of the Washington man he had no fear, that he wouldn't chaw off any one's ear,

as that pompous fellow had vainly said, that he'd better put his head under a pump instead, and let up and go on and give Hawkins a shake that was sort of inclined to be fair.

The message was finished at last, but not so the rumpus. From Washington City that night there came, a staunch six-footer, who, all but the mane, was the peer of that terrible beast, that certain old parties thought would a feast make of Daniel of old, who, as all of us know, sat in the den and saw the show, and departed in safety by the front door; (that lion had dined but a jiffy before).

Arrived in New York at break of day, to a restaurant our hero made his way; and after feasting with a lip of scorn, and nursing his wrath to keep it warm, to the telegraph office at once proceeded with frenzied mien and forehead beaded,

"Is Mr. E. here?" he inquired in tones that are death on the marrow in one's bones.

"I am Mr. E.," said the jolly Sam, in accents, oh! so soft and bland that it wilted at once that disciple of Mars, for which, perchance, Sam may thank his stars, and the fellow grinned till he showed his gum, and said "I am 'X' from Washington."

"Glad to see you, come in, old boy; when did you get here, Mr. Malloy? I am off this afternoon," said Sam, "we'll go and see Bar-



num's woolly man ; dine at Fulton Market on coffee and cakes, or over at Gould's on sirloin steaks, and go to the Old Bowery this evening."

And, would you believe it, this simple plan of chawing that ear pleased the Washington man, and he smiled and agreed to the whole with a bow, and no word was said of yesterday's row. And they feasted and chatted and had a grand time, and "X" left that night for his own fair clime ; they shook hands at the ferry, with God-speeds were free, and Sam sent to everybody his "'73." Yet they quarrelled next day in much the same way, and the next, and the next, and so on till to-day. But that pretty pink ear though oft threatened by wire, as long as life lasts will surely hang fire.

CAP. DE COSTA.

THOSE who read a previous paper in this volume entitled "Posie Van Dusen," may remember that a gentleman bearing the name of Cap. De Costa was incidentally introduced. Less attention was devoted to him than to the others, because he had never performed any of the marvellous feats which so redounded to the glory of Jim Lawless, nor had he ever won distinction in the peculiar respects in which it is vouchsafed that none but McCloskys shall achieve victory and renown ; and yet De Costa was an original in his way—a genuine ingot in the mine of humanity. It was his misfortune, however, in common with most of his class, that the retention of lucrative situations is not compatible with a free indulgence in wine and wassail. And thus it came to pass, in the year of our Lord 1860, that Mr. De Costa had been so regularly and persistently dismissed from the service of the American Company, in New York, as to render it somewhat difficult to persuade managers that he deserved a situation.

From August, 1860, until June, 1862, very little is known of the gentleman's history or his whereabouts. Vague rumors are still whispered concerning his operations during the

period mentioned, but the theories of his disappearance are so diverse in their nature that unless Mr. De Costa possessed the unusual boon of ubiquity he could scarcely have filled the bill. One story runs that he passed the interval in driving a mule team on some route having Sante Fé for its remoter terminus; another says he was engaged in New Jersey, where he flourished a shepherd's staff and looked after a flock as pastoral in their seeming, no doubt, as the average arrivals from the West, as seen at Communipaw; while still another informant holds that, at intervals during the entire period, telegraphers seeking relaxation in a game of billiards at the National, saw sometimes hovering in a dark corner a face mysteriously familiar, though changed and shy of notice, and others dropping in at Branch's after "30" for a lunch or some liquid comfort, noticed that a figure, which, according to Mike's testimony had been "hanging over that chair and baking himself all night in a comatose sthate," always came quickly to an upright posture and disclosed that it possessed legs and the faculty of locomotion, by speedily gliding up the steep stairs, and disappearing down Ann Street as if propelled by shame and humiliation.

But these distracting theories of De Costa's whereabouts do not alter the circumstance that

on the 8th of July, 1862, he appeared in a terribly demoralized condition at the office of a western superintendent, between whom and himself a dialogue, something as given below, is said to have taken place:

"I hear operators is skurce" said De Costa, with the skill of a diplomat. "Good many gone to the war and more going d—n soon; I'm an operator, old man, and, look here—I want a job."

"Indeed!" returned the gentleman, "but your manner, sir, is hardly what is due to men in my position, and you seem to have been drinking. I really fear we have no vacan——"

"Oh, that's played!" broke in the Captain. "I've been here before; I'm sorry if I haven't been respectful, but, d—n it, man, *you* don't seem to understand that good operators are skurce." And, as if in atonement for anything unfriendly in his manner, he squirted a stream of tobacco juice in very inconvenient proximity to the official boot, and fell to whistling "Auld Lang Syne."

What he said was true; the demand for operators was threatening to exceed the supply; circulars calling for "sound operators," to go into the army were freely distributed, and telegraphic officials were well aware that the facilities for handling the wonderfully increasing business were likely to be crippled from a



lack of operators. But the superintendent did not fancy the manner of the applicant and he prepared to annihilate him.

"No," he began, "old acquaintance should *not* be forgot, and with the record which you have, Mr. De Costa, the company is not likely to let your fame pass from memory; but we really don't need you. We only want a few operators just now, and it is essential that those should be absolutely first class—men capable of sending a message with one hand and receiving one with the other—who can work two wires at once, so that——"

"Look here, cully," interrupted De Costa, speaking most confidentially. "Look here, cully, you say you want men that can *do* that? Well, I'm your oyster. You want to engage me on the spot at your highest salary."

It is not within my province to describe the process of thought by which these two came ultimately to agree. De Costa's impudence may have awed the official into submission, or a fine sense of humor may have led the gentleman to give the veteran another trial. At all events, my friend of the military title found his way to the operating-room that very afternoon, and was enrolled on the list at the "highest salary," as he had suggested. During his stay his relations were tolerably pleasant, though some of his colaborers were taken down a peg

or two occasionally by his manner of answering their inquiries. A message of his receiving, containing upward of a hundred words, was once handed to a new operator for transmission to some point in the East. It was beautifully written and filled the blank completely. The sender got on gloriously until he reached the bottom, and then he was unable to see the check. He looked for it at the top and on the margin, but his "eager and expectant gaze" was each time disappointed. As a last resource he marched over to Cap.'s desk and said, very demurely:

"Mr. De Costa, you seem to have omitted the check by some——"

"Omitted the devil," responded Cap., a little pompously, observing with a wink at his interrogator, "nice copy, ain't it?" Then he turned it over and pointing to the middle of the back, exclaimed, "Why, you tow-topped lunkhead, what do you call that?" The check was there on the back, looming up solitary and alone, like the Latin inscription "Hic" on the tombstone of the departed inebriate.

His friends thought he had reformed, and, indeed, his behavior for a few months was so much better than was expected, that the position of all night man, which had become vacant, was tendered him. The duties were

light, with hours from 1 A. M. to 8 A. M. As a general thing he took scarcely a half-dozen messages, besides sending a little press to San Francisco, and jogged on the even tenor of his way as happy as a bird. But there came a sad, regretful pay-day night when Cap. met with a misfortune. He looked upon the wine when it was red.

"On horror's head horrors accumulate," you know, so it was not surprising that, after he had relieved his men, that San Francisco should offer a "special." I fancy that deep emotions were working in the old boy's breast when the doleful information came bumping across the plains; but be that as it may, deep emotions were working in several other breasts next morning. A special, which should have appeared in the New York *Tribune* that day, for reasons which the reader may surmise, hung innocently on its hook in the San Francisco office until long after the cock's shrill clarion had waked the echoes of the new born day.

The manager—or "Charley," as the Captain always called him—by some strange chance came earlier to the office that morning than usual, to find the door open, the fire gone out, and the room vacant. The butt of a cigar lying on the "overland" desk indicated that De Costa had sat pondering there on his duty,

and the feasibility of his performing it. The circuit closer was open, a piece of tin, which Cap. always took with him when he changed his base, was gone from the sounder, and on a blank lying loose among many others was written in pencil, in a neat chirography, unmistakably his, the following laconic adieu :

“ Charley :

I works no more; I resigns.

CAP.”

UNCLE DANIEL.

THE idiosyncrasies of the human mind are not more remarkable for their number than for their diversity. It is told of the great Richelieu that he found an agreeable pastime in jumping over chairs, and of De Grammont who surprised the great cardinal thus amusing himself one day, that he instantly joined in the artless sport like a true courtier that he was. The immaculate Dr. Johnson adduced no little internal satisfaction from stepping on the cracks in the pavements as he walked along the street. Poor Goldsmith amused himself by playing the flute to the peasants in the lands through which he passed in quest of material for "The Traveler," and Sir Walter Scott relaxed his nervous system by sliding down the baluster at Abbotsford with a pack of children on his back. Nor have these eccentricities been confined to cardinals, courtiers, or literateurs, for the luckless Louis XVI. turned his thoughts to lock-making in opportune moments, and Nero would not relinquish his coquetry with the violin whether Rome went down to ashes in a night, or went to perdition in a less tragic way.

I might multiply examples in support of this

theory ; I might call the proud list of names of those whom nothing could divert from their cherished hobby—the fiddler in the “Arkansas Traveler,” the hero of “Here She Goes and There She Goes,” Mrs. Micawber, who could never be prevailed upon to desert her lord—but I refrain ; their name is legion. And while these are only peculiarities of individual heads, there are those which obtain in entire national minds. The Frenchman is most engrossed with intrigues, the Englishman is happy in a dream of the infallibility of John Bull, the Teuton is inseparable from his Sunday beer and song, while the Ethiopic mind turns ever fondly to bewitching policy.

This delusive hobby your true son of Ham rides from early childhood to the hour when life’s fitful fever is waning, and the variegated landscape of human events fades upon his sight. As of the poet, Pope, it may be said of him

“He lisped in numbers,”

and when death comes I surmise he will expire with the inquiry, “What’s first to-day in de Kentucky ?” on his wandering tongue. A representative of the most superstitious race in the world, he believes in omens good and bad, and there is nothing which occurs in his daily life, or comes to him in visions, that can not be construed to throw a light across the mysterious

surface of this losing game. I say losing advisedly, for though he is always going to make his fortune, he is really losing, drop by drop, what might ultimately constitute one, by the investments of small amounts in this ruling hallucination of his soul. After your colored tonsor invites you to set him up in a shop of his own, to give him the coat you have on, or the sleeve-buttons your wife gave you at Christmas, don't he proceed to enlighten you concerning his experiences in playing "policy?" Certainly he does. If you know a darkey who is innocent of the significance of "gigs" and "saddles," he is a stranger among his kind.

In the attempt which has been made to suppress gambling of all sorts, the "policy" business has come in for a share of attention, and, though it is popularly thought this manner of tempting fortune has been crushed out, it is constantly coming to the surface to confuse and discomfort the detective mind. I was walking through a region called "Africa," situated in the neighborhood of Thompson and Broome streets, yesterday, when I met with an experience which leads me to make the above statement.

"What's first, Joe?" asked a tall, brawny son of Africa of a little negro trudging in an opposite direction.

Joe turned up the whites of his eyes, gave a

laugh, showing a solid row of ivories, and replied: "Why, I ain't seen de slip, but dey say, aroud to Dutch Hanks, that sixteen's fust, but I don't believe it. I ain't seen de slip, Joe. Golly, no, I ain't seen de slip, but I dreamed on twenty-six and I'll bet it comes fust. Just you see!"

A little further on I met an old darkey whose face looked exceedingly familiar. I stared at him and he at me until it flashed upon me that he was old Uncle Daniel Webster who used to be janitor at No. 21 Wall Street years and years ago. Knowing him then as a kind-hearted old policy-player, who talked to the operators as if they were really nephews of his, and who dreamed "gigs" and "saddles" for them to play and to lose upon, generally, I regret to say, as if he were their patron saint—knowing him thus, I introduced myself, and said that I hoped he had learned wisdom with increasing years, and had eschewed policy-playing from a conviction of its foolishness, even if the stringent laws against ticket selling had not deterred him from so doing. He parried my thrust at his weakness by meeting me thus:

"Why, dere is just as much policy-playing about dese corners as ever, only you got to get your tickets on de street. We got walking policy shops now; de pore police are looking everywhere for de shops. Just as if de boys

war a going to gub themselves away. We are bound to play in spite of 'em."

I learned, on investigation, that there are men who go about furnishing slips to all who wish to purchase, and the liquor shops and groceries which are frequented by the players have bulletins twice a day announcing the fateful numbers. Uncle Webster cited the fact, in illustration of how things were prospering, that one agent, familiarly known as "Nosey," was making \$200 per day. My simple-minded friend did not stop to inquire by what process it was made; he had no reverence for the unbending law of costs and compensations. He knew he was still untrammelled to toast his heavy frame behind a roaring fire and speculate on numbers; to go out and place his pitance on his favorite figures, and return to a renewal of the speculation. Free as the wind to sit and doze the afternoon away—and hope; to seek his humble, perhaps squalid, home at night richer, perhaps, but poorer, probably; free to wander, later, through the mazes of that endless dream of numbers and hunt lucky combinations in a vision. That was enough for him.

* * * * *

All of the above, which was written more than a year ago, goes literally for nothing so far as it applies to Uncle Daniel. A few days

ago a shadow was cast on the page I was writing, and looking up to ascertain the cause thereof, I beheld Uncle Webster standing beside me. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like Uncle Daniel on this occasion. After a brief greeting he informed me with a great deal of circumlocution, and in words about the size of his hand, that he had "cut 'em this time, Marse John, cut 'em berry deep—eight hundred dollars." I understood of course that he had struck the first number in Kentucky and had won some money. I tried several times to congratulate him, but he invariably said: "Hole on, Marse John, your old uncle am nearly through." Finally he did finish his story, concluding with the gratifying intelligence that he had "quit gigs and saddles, hosses and bridles forebber fo' God."

This brought me to my feet, and grasping him by the hand, I said: "Uncle Daniel, I have always looked upon you as a superstitious, simple-minded, and incorrigible policy-player. But you have redeemed yourself. In you, sir, I behold a man—one man in ten thousand, uncle—who has the fixedness of purpose and general clear headedness to quit a losing game when you have temporarily beaten it. Would to goodness others might go and do likewise. I tell you, uncle—"



He interrupted me with a laugh that waked the echoes, and between his repeated explosions managed to say :

“Marse John, I does like to hear you talk. You wus allers a master hand to take de tucks out ob de dictionary book. I do wish you would precipitate yourself and exhort up to our Crosby Street Methodis’ church,” and then he was lost again in a paroxysm of laughter that stirred up all my associates, and made them wonder what sort of a guest had dropped in upon me.

But the interview was ended betimes, and Uncle Webster took his leave after imparting the information that his brother, who was a head waiter at the Farragut House, at Rye Beach, had sent for him to come down and drive a stage between the railroad station at Hampton and the hotel, and that he would start that day by the Fall River boat. Long after he had disappeared I heard him shuffling down the iron staircase, and there rose aloft a peal of genuine, hearty, happy laughter, that told of a contented heart and of Ethiopian lungs.

Thus Uncle Webster left us. I fancy him this beaming afternoon cracking his whip gaily over his springing horses, and I see the old yellow coach go bounding from the depot

over the rough country road till it disappears among the trees forming the gentle landscape. Drive on, oh, driver, from Hampton! light hearted and free, and may the many troubles ever enacting on the world's great stage never be heard of on the stage from Hampton.

SUMMER RECREATION.

It was a long, long time ago, perhaps ; but you, my middle-aged friend, writing incessantly from morning until night, and you, my merchant prince, or Wall Street man — and you, and you, and you—remember it ; for, despite your city ways to-day, you are all country bred, and know something of cows and sheep, woods and glens, mountains and meadows ; the music of birds and the fragrance of flowers and hay. One day you were playing “barn tick” with Sammy Smith, when your father came out and said : “Come, Henry, go and catch Jenny.” Jenny was the family horse. You threw down the bat regretfully, not so much because you were loath to give up your runs, technically speaking, as because it was so natural to fetch that old ball of stocking yarn, with a cork in the middle, a blow which would send it soaring into space and land it in the stubble field ; and it gave you such unalloyed pleasure to see Smithy, who was catcher, pick up his foot every few seconds, and nurse a toe with a big crevice underneath, which was sure to suffer as he went bounding into the rough field beyond.

But you went into the barn, and found a peck measure and a few ears of corn, and proceeded over into the seven acre lot where the old mare was lazily grazing. You approached her cautiously, saying: "Kajock! Kajock!" and she took one of the ears of corn so confidently that a stranger to her peculiarities might have inferred that she was perfectly enchanted with the idea of being caught. But when you attempted to engage her neck in the halter, and you thought you had accomplished it—pshaw! you never knew how she did it, but somehow she eluded you and went skipping over the hill with you in hot pursuit. It was a sweltering July day, and at the end of a half hour spent in a useless chase you found yourself standing on a side-hill, with the perspiration starting from every pore, and the blood oozing from a slight bruise on the top of your sun browned foot where the old mare had stepped on it a moment before. A mocking brook bubbled hard by, the tantalizing chirrup of birds was distinguishable from a clump of trees in the distance, and the light wind itself, which blew out your embryo overalls and played with your calico jacket, seemed to be whispering distracting things to a honey bee hovering near. Perhaps you cried a little at your ill-success, for you were a little fellow then; and as you wondered what to do next,

a well-known voice was heard in the rear, and it said: "Well, Henry, ain't you caught that mare yet? I want to use her *to-day*."

You had no heart to answer the sarcasm in the last sentence, and you yielded up the measure of corn passively to your sire, and he walked down to where Jenny was standing. She came up to the measure when your father said "Kajock," because she, in common with your mother, yourself, and all other dwellers on that dear old farm, knew that when the old gentleman spoke he meant business; so you were not surprised a moment later when they passed by you, one dignified but triumphant, the other submissive. You were told, as you trotted along behind, that there was no trouble about catching a mare, and talked to in a manner prompting in your breast the wicked hope that Jenny would, some time in the near future, elevate the author of your being about seventy-five feet toward the blue canopy of heaven, and take the conceit out of him! You stood around while she was being harnessed, intending to experiment further with Smithy, his toe and the stubble; but as the head of the house prepared to drive away he remarked: "Henry, you had better weed out that carrot bed this afternoon." His word was law, and a law that no member of the family had ever defied; so you obeyed implicitly; but as you

knelt in that weedy carrot bed, angry tears were falling beneath a rude palm hat, and you offered a brief but vigorous prayer that your parent might ultimately be scalped by a Fenimore Cooper redman ; and then you went on weeding, and wishing that husbandry was not.

THE BLUE AND THE GRAY.

It is so rarely that the world witnesses the spectacle of a superior nature triumphing over a baser one, that occasions of the kind should certainly go on record when they come under observation. Who knows the number of fine natures that are crowded to the wall almost every day by rougher and tougher fiber! How often, indeed, is an unlooked for trait in human nature revealed in a flash by some slight accident, but for the occurrence of which the world would have gone on doing an injustice, and by which an impression is left on surrounding minds which endures throughout a lifetime!

During the war a friend of the writer, a soldier in the Federal army, to whom he is indebted for the data of the following narrative, was stationed with his regiment at a dismantled Southern town, and, as too often happened in regiments stationed at dismantled Southern towns, the supply of food did not go beyond the narrow boundary of that mysterious texture currently known as "salt horse" on one side, and enigmatical "hard tack" on the other. Not remarkably toothsome at any time,

what little charms they possessed were somewhat blunted by a familiarity with them which had bred contempt, and it was frequently remarked at mess that some fresh meat must be had, and that straightway.

One day comrade Simmons informed his immediate friends that he meditated a journey into the country a few miles, where he had reason to know that a diminutive pig, the property of a Southern lady, was frisking about as unconscious of impending danger as if a civil war was not waging under its very nose. Next day Simmons went in quest of his prey. He marched up to the door, and presenting arms, waited for a response to his knock. It came presently in the form of a middle-aged lady, very serene and very grave. It was in vain, however, that Simmons besought her to sell the coveted porcine; she preferred to keep the pig, she said; it would grow and be worth a good deal more in the Fall; in short, she did not care to dispose of her property. Simmons argued the case with fluency, alluding in touching phrase and tone to his long-suffering messmates; money was no object; they would bear the expenses jointly and were willing to pay more now for the porker than it would bring in the fall if it should weigh a ton.

She listened patiently and courteously to all his overtures, but like the incorrigible child



whom the poet met, and who met the poet with the provoking refrain :

“ Master, we are seven,”

she answered all arguments with the statement that she didn't care to sell, and at last she bowed gravely to her unwelcome guest, and closed the door.

Simmons was nonplussed, and passed out of the yard, wondering what reasonable excuse he could make to his comrades for not bringing the pig a captive, when the object of his visit came running across the path. It was a terrible temptation, and Simmons fell. A second later the bayonet of a musket shot through his pigship, and the gun went back to the shoulder, with its squealing burden high in air. Then Simmons came back to the house, rapped again, and the proud woman again greeted him. For a second only she raised her eyes to her expiring property, and not a muscle of her face changed from its repose and dignity, as meeting the soldier's eyes she quietly inquired :

“ Well, my man, what is it ?”

“ Will you loan me a kettle to cook my pig in ?” asked Simmons, with an impudence born of desperation.

“ Certainly, sir,” she replied, and she brought it to him with the grace of a queen.

The pig was duly cooked and eaten, and then

the story was told of how it was obtained ; and the particulars of the episode were recited many times thereafter—in the mess-room of an afternoon, around the camp fire when the brands had burned low and the stars seemed to shed a light of tenderness over all ; on the march and elsewhere, Simmons always concluding with the observation—“ Ah ! boys, our mothers and sisters are good *women*, but a *lady* one meets scarcely once in a lifetime.”

And it was a noticeable circumstance **that a silence more eloquent than words was uniformly observed by such sons of Mars as listened to the story.** Each seemed to assume that he as well as Simmons was made of baser stuff than that which entered into the composition of the magnificent woman who, though importuned and tempted with money, of which she was in sore need, yielded not ; who, wronged, never forgot that she was a lady, and whose gracious manner under adverse fortunes gave many a blue-coated poacher a glimpse at a sublimity of character, the existence of which in the human economy, he had not else suspected.

AN AUTUMN EPISODE.

No pent up Utica could contract the powers of Mr. Tip McClosky. A man of his genius could scarcely be expected to confine himself to any one line of business, or to any one locality, and he did not. In a metaphorical sense he chased the roebuck o'er the plain, but ever fresh and free remained. Some of his pilgrimages were voluntary, others were inspired by circumstances over which he had no control, while a fitting regard for the prejudices of officials often prompted him to surrender lucrative situations with telegraph companies, and turn his attention temporarily to other pursuits. Arriving one day in Plainfield, Conn., he said something to the station agent about having had trouble in getting through the Union lines, and adding that the walking from Washington was rather monotonous, asked for employment as a waiter in the railroad restaurant. His appearance was against him, and he was put off on the pretext that there were no vacancies. He then applied for work to a master mechanic who was superintending the laying of a new track near by, but was again refused. Not at

all abashed, he returned to the depot, murmuring :

“ More human, more divine than we,
In truth half human, half divine
Is woman, when good stars agree
To temper, with their rays benign,
The hour of her nativity.”

Reaching the platform he paced up and down awhile, and finally said: “I wish I wasn’t quite so unprepossessing at this time ; I would call in and see the telegraph girl. But, pshaw! ‘Worth makes the man, the want of it the fellow,’ Pope says. And old Polonius said to Laertes, ‘Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy—neat but not gaudy.’ Egad, that’s me. Costly as my purse can buy—been out of funds for three months—trunk in Chattanooga. Cheer up, Tip, my boy, and make your *devoir* to the lady.”

His address at this time had a dash about it that invariably captivated the female heart. If one of the fair sex met him during his periods of seediness, and elevated her sensitive nose at first, it mattered little. Given a hearing he speedily dissipated all depreciating thoughts from his hearers’ minds, and beguiled them to the last degree with tales of moving accident by flood and field, with bits of reminiscence, telegraphic and otherwise, or characteristic stories of his celebrated peers, all of whom he knew

personally, and whose history he was wont to touch upon in a manner most droll and winning.

The lady operator at Plainfield that September afternoon listened to Tip's easy flow of words, and at the end of a ten minutes' conversation through the little window, he had enshrouded himself in a halo of glory, which toned down his faded dress and sunburned features to a degree that gained him admission to the office. Once in, he insisted on the operator giving her entire attention to her needlework, while he did the business. "The idea of a robust operator like me," he said, "sitting here idling away my time when there is work to be done, and no one else but a lady to do it, is absurd."

And she smilingly surrendered her chair to the "gentle gentleman," somehow much handsomer than he looked, and sat and sewed the afternoon away in a little rocker in the opposite corner.

From that moment Tip gained an admirer for all time. An inferior operator herself, his entertainer regarded a perfect sound reader as a *rara avis*, and when she had been to Worcester or Norwich, and had seen male operators receive press reports, she had returned home and been despondent for a week from thinking what a lamentable incompetent she was. But she

had never seen any one in Worcester or Norwich whose telegraphic ability could compare with Tip's. He told everybody who essayed to send to him to rush things. "Trying to get my hand in," he said. "Been traveling extensively—taking views a-foot—and am rusty." Meantime he paid the most knightly attention to his *vis-a-vis*. "Talk right along, my little friend," he would say; "it don't make the slightest difference to me, even if I am receiving. Got used to that long ago. Learned the business that way from old Dad Sullivan in Savannah, Ga. He's dead, now; a wonderful operator, and one of Nature's noblemen. Green be the turf above him." And the pretty copies Tip took as he went on chatting and telling stories, and the merry jingle of his nervous "i, i, o, k., Mc," quickly established his reputation, as he established it everywhere.

In many a bright pair of feminine eyes you were a great hero that afternoon, Mr. Tip McClosky, as you sat there relaying New York business for all the girls on that Hartford and Providence wire—business which should have gone to Hartford only you thought it a hardship the girls should call so long, and offered to take it yourself; but you were no hero in the eyes of the young man at Norwich to whom you sent that business at breakneck speed, to

the infinite delight of your fair companion. She cordially despised that conceited youngster, who had gravitated from a country office to the "City on the Thames," and who made life miserable for all who knew less of the telegraphic art than he. It was a very warm afternoon, but you made it warmer in the vicinity of the Plainfield wire, in Norwich office, than it was anywhere else on this terrestrial globe; and a certain aspiring operator went home that night with a very much smaller opinion of himself than he had entertained formerly. You yourself admitted that you had "tried to make it interesting for him."

Finally tea time came, and Tip was invited to accompany his new found lady friend to the station agent's house, where she boarded. He was coolly received, but with womanly adroitness she plied him with questions at table, and he had attentive listeners directly. After office hours he returned to the house, and during the evening, like Goldsmith's travel-stained soldier, he shouldered his crutch, figuratively speaking, and told how fields were won. "You will be pleased to give Mr. McClosky a bed to-night, of course, Mr. Grandy," said a persuasive female voice as the clock chimed ten; and Tip lay down that night in a clean, sweet bed, and slept as soundly, and rose as brisk

and happy next morning, as if he owned the universe.

"You have an influential friend among us, my boy," said Mr. Grandy during the forenoon. "I have been persuaded to find something for you to do. She says your misfortunes can not hide the fact that you are a gentleman and a wonderful operator."

The next day Tip became a general utility man about the depot, and at the end of his first week he had demonstrated his fitness for better work and was appointed ticket-seller. When he left town, three months later, he said gravely to Mr. Grandy: "Good-by, and God bless you all, particularly my little operator friend. I should die if I staid here longer. I must have excitement, and I'll find it among the military telegraphers beyond the Potomac. Yet I feel like crying at leaving here. I have been more respectable the past three months than I ever was before in my life; but the end has come—good-by!" And the steamboat train for Norwich, with Tip waving his handkerchief on the rear platform, dashed out of sight, and Plainfield knew him no more.

Let me conclude by giving one episode in Tip's experience as a ticket-seller. His visit to Plainfield was made early in the sixties, when postal currency was scarce and silver change at

a premium. Postage stamps were in general use for change at that time, and one day an inebriated and quarrelsome stranger called for a ticket for Hartford, tendering a bank-note. Tip stamped the ticket, and counting out about a dollar in postage stamps put them down with his hand over them to prevent the wind, which was blowing briskly, from scattering them to the four corners of the earth. He waited patiently a moment for the purchaser to take ticket and stamps, but the fellow was obstinate and held back. It was then that Tip raised his sheltering hand and cried, in a three card monte voice: "N-e-x-t gentleman." Some of those postage stamps blew back into the office, others blew out of doors, and what became of the remainder of them is still a mystery. The purchaser finally succeeded in getting his ticket and one three cent stamp, and in getting very angry. Elbowing his way back to the window once more he bawled: "I want the rest of my change." Leveling a look on him which would have tarnished the silver mountings on a steam fire engine, Tip shook his finger slowly before the fellow's face, and said in measured accents: "Young man you have *had* your change *once*. Now if you don't move away from here I'll come out there and bust your crust." The man looked at Tip for a moment only, and

moved mournfully away. His regard for the safety of his "crust" kept him away, and, when his train arrived, he was the first man to board it. Ticket selling at Plainfield during the remainder of Tip's stay went on peacefully and without let or hindrance.

Mr. McClosky had made his record.

AN OLD MAN'S EXEGESIS. .

"My dear Trafton," said a young friend, who met me on the street the other day, "why the Dickens will you persist in associating with that Gregory Judd?"

I know all about Judd. He fails to pay his bills, neglects his engagements and dresses far from fashionably. Judd is what the world styles a shiftless man. His whole *tout ensemble*, whichever way you view him, reminds you of a shoe that has run down at the heel. The question put to me was a difficult one to answer, off hand, and so I did what my fellow man usually does when he is puzzled. I assumed a look of surprise and replied:

"Why?"

My interrogator, aware that I knew Judd's failings fully as well as he, became indignant at once, and bestowing a look upon me which said as plainly as words could do, "Trafton, I blush for you," walked away, blushing as he went, whether from shame for me or from indignation, I can not pretend to say.

When I reached my office I sat and thought about Judd for a long time, but pondering on the question propounded did not assist me much toward giving a satisfactory answer. Fi-

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nally I was aroused by a light tap on my shoulder, and looking up I beheld the veritable Mr. Judd himself. He was as forlorn looking as ever, under a venerable hat, matched with an untidy cravat, lack luster gaiters, and a suit of clothes which had not improved on long acquaintance. "I have just dropped in," said Judd, "like Pry in the play, and I hope I don't intrude." He added that having discovered a creditor whom he could not pay coming up the street, he had eluded him by dodging into my office.

An hour elapsed before Judd left me. It was a joyous hour to me and to him, too, I think, for when he left me the look of weariness which was settled on his face when he came had disappeared, and his countenance beamed as pleasantly as ever Harold Skimpole's beamed in his afflictions. Judd is, in fact, a sort of modified Skimpole with embarrassments as numerous, though lacking some of the lax ideas entertained by Mr. Dickens' hero. If my young friend had been present as I pressed a bank note into Judd's hand and wished him better fortune, I should have replied to the query with which this explanation opens something as follows :

There is no good end to be served by my denying that I like Judd immensely, or that his society, despite his many weaknesses, is dearer

to me than that of any of my other friends. I always feel younger after seeing him—his presence near me is a perpetual solace. In Judd you behold the friend and companion of my youth. We are both old men, now; our spring, summer, and autumn have passed away and in this, the winter of our lives, when the snow is settling upon our heads and beards, and when our faces are beginning to bear witness of heavy weather experienced during life's voyage, we live over in memory the three seasons which are gone, and deduce unspeakable pleasure therefrom. Away up among the hills and dales of Massachusetts, where the Blackstone winds brightly in the sunlight a mere brook; where the atmosphere is as clear and fragrant as nectar; where, of all the world, the trees and the earth are of the greenest possible tint; where the robin sings in the sweetest strains at morning; where the blue jay is the bluest; where the whippoorwill chirps in tones of the most melancholy sweetness at night; where the sun is brightest, the sky clearest; where the moon shines the softest; where the stars twinkle the merriest, and where everything around, in our opinion at least, is primitive, beautiful and smiling, we were born and passed together our dear, dreamy, delicious days of boyhood.

Amid these gentle scenes, we read the Chil-

dren of the Abbey, the Arabian Nights, Robinson Crusoe, and many other delightful books borrowed from a half hermit, half philosopher who lived in our neighborhood. Along the banks of the most crooked and most lively of all brooks that babble through sweet meadows we have crept with catlike steps angling for the wary trout, until we knew by heart each rock and bush along the devious course of that garrulous streamlet. We have hunted the hills together for miles around for hazel nuts; we have raked hay, stolen peaches and musk melons and attended huskings, weddings, and rural merry makings of every kind, in company, forty long years ago. Schools were not as plentiful in our time as now, but after the busy summer time was over, when the "school marm" had departed for the season, and the long vacation had passed, then would come some tall, strapping Ichabod Crane to occupy the throne at the district school during the winter, and we would pack up our little stock of books, tallow our great cowhide boots, and adopt the *rôle* of pupils. We were quite "man grown" before we graduated at Science Hill, and we remember very distinctly that near the end of our last term we were not a little chagrined by having the rector's daughter, a pert little miss of perhaps ten years, "go above" us both in the spelling class.



Forty years have wrought great changes even in that secluded region where the air is so pure and everything so joyous that it seems singular that people ever become ill or weary there when we consider that they exist at all in great cities. Much of the somnolence which once lingered about the section has been marred by the advent of the railroad, but sufficient that is old remains to render it the "dearest spot on earth" to us still. How dearly we love to revisit those scenes! how happy we are in walking over the paths we once trod so buoyantly, and in dwelling on old recollections!

We make our excursions quite *incognito*. Sauntering through the town or lingering in the old burial-ground reading the names engraven on the slabs, we are almost strangers among those who now people our old neighborhood. But what reck's it? If the pine grove is still and neglected where once our laughter echoed so joyously, can not imagination, dipping her pencils in the sunset's richest dyes, fill out the picture? Certainly it can and does, for Judd and I are a pair of very imaginative as well as very soft-hearted old fellows. We are sometimes a trifle melancholy on these visits, particularly when we think of our old companions. Alas! where are they? Beneath the green-sward in the quaint little burial-ground some are sleeping, a part of whom lived and died

amid the familiar scenes of youth. Others went forth into the world, were lured on and on by visions of renown and wealth, and returned like poor Slingsby, footsore, weary, and poverty-stricken to their birthplace to

“Husband out life’s taper at the close,
And keep the flames from wasting, by repose,”

but who died at last, and were gathered to their fathers. Many are scattered about the world still living; more have died in regions far remote from their homes, while a few, a very few, are yet living, like Miriam Lane, “old and garrulous” — volumes incarnate richly stored with legends and anecdotes bearing on the past.

’Tis a simple tale, this one of ours, scarcely worth the telling, perchance; and yet there is something in it. There is hardly a community, however small, that has not its Judd and Traf-ton, sometimes many braces of them, about whom their acquaintances are ever speculating. We should not forget that there are many “ups and downs” in life, and that the “downs” are usually the more common; Judd’s experience has been wholly with them. There are many things beside prosperity which should endear to us our fellow creatures. Success commands admiration and should receive its due; but honest failure, with its long train of enervating embarrassments and disappointments,

should receive our respect and sympathy. A green spot existing at this advanced day in Judd's heart, as illustrated by the love he bears the region in which he was born and the associations of his childhood—existing where it would seem such repeated failures and disasters in life as have been his could have given birth to nothing but bitterness—speaks of the goodness and largeness of his soul, and makes him worthy of a better friendship than mine.

But a little longer shall we perplex you ; our-candle is burning low, and ere long its weak light will expire, to be relumed no more.

DEPARTED DAYS.

IN the year of our Lord, 1867, there came to work at No. 145 Broadway a thin, prematurely old and gray young man of not more than twenty-six years. No one seemed to know anything about him, and he soon dropped into our ranks and came and went day after day without eliciting much interest on the part of those around him. He was very quiet, and seldom spoke unless addressed, but then in a low and sweetly musical voice. That he was intelligent and well educated everybody conceded, but he manifested no disposition to mix with the general throng; and thus it happened that the general throng, without thinking much about it, came to speak of him with more respect than the appellation given him would imply as "old George Phipps," and to leave him pretty much to himself. He sat right across the aisle from me, and I often studied his sad though pleasant face, and ere long put his name down in my mind with those of some other men I had met, and whom I may briefly describe by stating that they were men with histories. Yes, I was moderately sure that George

Phipps had a history, and I longed to know what it was, and give him my young and boyish friendship for all it was worth. But months passed, and we knew no more of our associate than we did when he came, except that he was a magnificent operator, and that he was as sweet as a day in June, though as sad, as I have indicated, as the melancholy and sighing days of the later autumn. His voice and manner always reminded me of the falling of the hectic October leaves, the surging of the autumn wind through leafless branches. But the glorious sunbeams were always resting on his head, making sweet and loveable his life and character.

One night we had a severe sleet storm, and hardly a wire was left intact in any direction. The full force had been ordered on duty waiting for the lines to come "O. K." and sat about in little knots, telling stories and speculating on the chances of being kept on duty until morning. For a time I formed one of a little company, but not being particularly interested in the topic of discussion, and seeing George Phipps sitting alone, I approached him. After a short exchange of common-places, I asked, abruptly:

"Are you a married man, Mr. Phipps?"

The reply came slowly: "No."

If that little monosyllable had been kept on

ice for a century it could not have been colder. I saw that I had been imprudent, that I had awkwardly touched a chord in the man's heart that was sacred. I was very sorry, and being very young and inexperienced in hiding my emotions, I made a failure of it. The tears came into my eyes, my lip trembled, and I felt wretched. He saw the state of things at a glance, and said, kindly :

"I beg your pardon, John, I didn't mean to be rude, but I had just been thinking of events scarcely six years old, but such bitter, hopeless memories that it seems as if I had lived a thousand years since the page on which they are written was turned down in the book of Fate—turned down forever."

He paused, and I said nothing. "I have never spoken of these things," he continued, "but I think I was something like you at twenty; how sadly I have changed since then!"

He stopped again, and then continued: "I don't mind telling you my story, if you would care to hear it;" and as I eagerly answered, "Do tell me," he resumed: "It is a sad story, my little friend, it concerns a woman. Some say, hearts do not break, others, that women's hearts do sometimes, but that a man's is tough, and can bear disaster to the affections without material injury. May be it is true, generally

speaking, but there are exceptions—the exceptions, I suppose,” he said, musingly, “that philosophers would tell you prove the rule. You see me to-day old and prematurely gray. I have never been a dissipated man. I inherited a fine constitution from my father. I have lived regularly and have never suffered from disease, but I am as you see me, nevertheless. Do you ask me if I am heart broken? I can not say that, but I have mourned over dead and buried hopes for five years, and God’s beautiful world will never look so fair and sweet again to me as the hour when I close my eyes upon it forever.”

He moved slightly in his chair, and said, as if studying on the matter, “It looks like a case of broken heart, don’t it?”

Then he was silent for several minutes, but when he spoke again, his voice had changed, and he proceeded more cheerfully than I had ever heard him speak before :

“Six years ago last August I was employed in an Eastern city. I worked the New York wire, and one day while I was sending, an office boy came up, and said: ‘Mr. Phipps, there’s a lady outside as wants to see yer.’ I cleared my hook, asked New York to wait a second, and went out into the vestibule of the office. A vision of loveliness such as I had never seen until then stood before me. She

was an entire stranger to me, but we were soon chatting gaily, nevertheless, for she had said in the meantime: 'I am Helen Banks, from Saybrook, and, as I was passing through here, on my way to Rockville, where I am to take the office, I thought it not improper that I should call and renew, in *propria persona*, the acquaintance we had formed by wire.'

"I have burdened you, by inference, with one exploded theory, so don't mind another," he continued, "I fell in love at first sight. She was a lovely creature, small of stature, bright, intelligent, modest, enchanting, and she appeared to me as suddenly and unexpectedly as Diana appeared to Endymion. How readily I accepted Endymion's *rôle*, and with what alacrity I awoke from my sleep of every-day life, to a new life of love and bliss I need not tell you. She staid only a few minutes, and at parting, she said gaily ;

" 'I expect to be intensely lonesome down at Rockville, and that my only recreation will be that derived from listening to the birds and to your musical sending. Think of me sometimes, and when the wire is idle, say a word to poor me, won't you?' she went on, half jocosely, half in earnest. 'And' she concluded, 'when you are too busy to bid a body good-day, please imagine that

Pretty, and pale, and tired
She sits, in her stiff backed chair
While the blazing summer sun
Shines on her soft brown hair.'

and all the rest of it. Good-by,' and she was gone.

"How dark and dismal the old office looked as I resumed my duties. The sunbeams which in my imagination nestled in her hair and played around the dimples in her cheeks, lending a new and genial luster to the office, and blessing every nook and corner in the dim old room like a visible benediction, went out with her. I was very thoughtful and preoccupied that afternoon, and felt that I could afford to smile at my companions who sought to tease me by asking if that was the young lady who inquired so often if Mr. 66i66s was in. Well, time passed on, and what with chatting on the wire, and corresponding by mail, we finally reached that epoch in our acquaintance when I dared to offer myself in marriage. A letter was the medium of my proposal—I had not courage to make a personal appeal."

He paused, and drummed on the desk with his fingers for a little time, and then said :

"I waited patiently three days for an answer, but none came. Then I waited a week, a month, and then she resigned and went home. I dared not make any inquiry of her meantime,

though I did write confidentially to the post-master at Rockville, and learned that he had himself delivered the letter into her hands. I saw how it was, she could not accept me, and was too kind to tell me so. I went into the army when the war broke out, but returned home on a furlough in 1863. I learned that Helen had married her cousin a few months before, and had removed to Iowa. I was resolved to make the best of it, and be a man. You see how well I have succeeded," he said, smiling sadly. "Just before my furlough was out, I took up a copy of a morning paper published in the city where I had been formerly employed, and started on seeing my own name.

At first I thought I had been accidentally included in a list of killed and wounded. I hastily turned the paper to read the heading, and my heart sank within me. Through hot, blinding tears, which I could not stay, I read the sad, sad story that made me what I am. A post-office clerk had been arrested for robbing the mail; in his room were found undorsed, and therefore useless checks, and, 'among other things,' the account said, 'Personal letters to the following named addresses.' Then followed a list of a hundred or more names, among which was mine. I took the first train to —, and applying at police head-

quarters, obtained my letter. It was as I had feared—it was her letter accepting me as her husband. I crushed it in my hands, and crying, ‘Oh! God, too late, too late!’ fell swooning on the floor. A few weeks later I went back to my post in the army. My comrades said I was the bravest man they had ever seen. I rushed into the thickest of the fight, and feared nothing. I courted an honorable death, but bullets whistled by me, shells burst by my side, killing men by dozens. The fever broke out in our regiment, and fifty men died in one week, but I lived on. Promotion followed promotion, and at last, to please my mother, I resigned my commission, stayed at home a month, and finally promised to keep out of the army on condition that I should resume work at my old business wherever I could find it. Since then I have been in Canada, and finally drifted here to be nearer home. Now, John, let me tell you here that—”

“Mr. Phipps, answer Washington for specials, please,” called out night manager Marks from the switch, and the story was ended.

The thread thus broken was never taken up again, and by some indefinable understanding between us, I guarded his secret as jealously as if it were I who had loved and lost, and henceforward neither of us mentioned it.

I left New York soon after this, and never

saw George Phipps again until I stood one August day two years later in a small Connecticut town, and looked down upon all that was mortal of him as he lay in his coffin. His sweet face was as natural as in life, and scarcely any paler. His mother stood by and reverently kissed his brow again and again, while the sturdy frame of his grand old father trembled like a reed shaken in the wind as he gazed fondly and tearfully upon the dead. There were not many particulars of his death to be obtained. I doubted if any one except the old pastor knew of his love and the suffering he had undergone.

"He came home" said his mother "about a month ago, looking no worse than usual, but he shortly began to fail perceptibly day by day. The doctor came and prescribed a change of air, but George said he would be better soon, and begged to remain quietly where he was. One afternoon he walked out under the elms and laid down in the hammock. At six o'clock I went out and asked him to return to the house. He said 'Not yet, mother. It is delightful here, the breeze refreshes me, and I feel perfectly easy and content. I will remain where I am, thank you, and watch the sun go down.' When the sun had set I went out again, but," she added, in a breaking though sweetly musical voice like George's, "my boy had

gone to rest with the sun whose downward course he watched."

The minister came and preached the customary sermon, ranking the dead man with

"Men whose lives glide on like rivers that water the woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven;"

the modest cortege moved away, and George Phipps was laid to rest in a solitary grave beneath the murmuring pines on a neighboring hill-side. This was done at his request, made to the old preacher whom he also acquainted with his story when he felt that the end was near. Not being a relative, I did not follow the remains to the grave, and as I prepared to leave the house I met a sweet, sad-faced woman whom I had noticed approach and gaze long and tenderly upon the form of my departed friend, and then retire to a remote corner of the room weeping painfully. Some one said she was a stranger, others that she was some woman living in the village, and still others said that she was a relative. But she was not the latter, else she would have been provided with a carriage. We left the house together, and as we walked down the neat gravel path, I said:

"This is a pretty village. Do you live here?"

"No, sir," she replied; "I live many, many

miles from here. Mr. Phipps was an old friend of mine, and my husband insisted that I should come to his funeral."

"You live in Iowa, perhaps," said I, gently. Our eyes met for a moment, and we understood each other.

"You are married, I believe—happily so, I trust," I ventured, after a moment.

"My husband is very kind," she replied. "I am quite content, thank you. We have two children."

"I suppose you know the whole story," I added, after a pause, "the stolen letter, his suffering and his unaltered love."

"Yes, sir, I know it all now," she said, weeping. "The good parson who preached the funeral sermon to-day wrote me the sad story a few weeks ago. It was he, too, who telegraphed George's death, and influenced his parents to defer the funeral until now. I arrived only at noon to-day. Oh! sir," she continued, "I try to think it is all for the best. I pray to heaven to help me to be true and good to my kind and affectionate husband, and to make me worthy of my pure and guileless little ones, but I sometimes fear that I have only a shattered heart left to love them with."

We shook hands and separated, probably forever. I went back to my key, she back to Iowa, her husband and little ones, and her

great sorrow. And that ends the story, unless I add an odd fancy of my own.

Sometimes when the house is hushed, and midnight draws near, I sit and smoke and dream. Watching the clouds as they curl upward from my cigar, or peering through the smoke-rings I blow forth, I see hopes and joys I have not met, which, as they vanish in the haze, leave my cheeks wet. And as I sit and muse anon, my mind flits back to a quiet, rustic village, and I hear the winds softly sighing through the pines above a solitary grave on a hill-side. Looking west, I see a sweet sad-faced matron sitting beneath a cottage portico, and happy gleeful children are about her. Then I listen to the pines again, and I fancy I hear them whisper,

“Pretty and pale and tired
She sits in her stiff backed chair,
While the blazing summer sun
Shines on her soft brown hair;”

and as I turn once more, I see her yet again—
waiting, waiting, waiting.





MINOR PARAGRAPHS.



MINOR PARAGRAPHS.

"WHO BREAKS PAYS,"—ON 4. EAST.

Calm now prevails in many a country burg,
Where o'er his beat the wily peeler plods ;
The lamps are out in almost every shop,
Yet through the night the "click, click, click" is heard.
Behind a desk there sits a telegraphic gent,
Whose toil ne'er ends till the "Good-night" is sent.
"His pen runs rambling like a straying steed,"
A halt, a dive, an oath—a word is lost, indeed.
What shall he do ? Ask for the missing link ? Not much.
Then head is scratched, and as the never-wearying,
Never-faltering hand keeps rattling wildly on,
The word comes back, like the dear
Memory of some forgotten thing, and in it goes.
Twenty words behind ! Open the key, catch up,
Then close again, sign not, and reputation's saved !
Is it ? "Aye, there's the rub," as moony Hamlet says.
"I know that man—opens but never breaks ;
Three marks for that ;" thus Bish * his vengeance takes.

* Thomas J. Bishop now of Baltimore, but in 1874 a celebrated press sander in the New York office.

MAGUFFINSVILLE is, generally speaking, a quiet place. In fact it may be regarded as somewhat subdued and neutral tinted as a theater of life and bustle. The people of Maguffinsville, nevertheless, are much like their brethren elsewhere. They have their entrances and their exits, and in their time play many parts, as well as poker and other games of a precarious and worldly nature. One Saturday night they had a lottery up in Joe Hemmingway's barn, the chiefest prize being a hunting-cased watch of really fine quality. There were also watch chains, keys, and other inexpensive trinkets in the bill, and a much larger congregation, it is to be regretted, was in attendance than would probably have been the case had the demonstration been of a more moral or æsthetic character. Mr. Warrington Jennison, who held several tickets, was present. He was in high spirits, and drank in the words of the man who was calling off the numbers as well as something contained in a railroad bottle, with much relish. It is a deplorable fact that humanity is prone to rejoice at the ill-success of others, and as chains, keys, and an occasional rolling-pin were distributed, as number after number was called, Mr. Jennison became so hilarious and talked so loudly about his number being 311, that it was not until he was persuaded with a cart stake that he would sit down. And then,

when the clarion tones of the conductor of the scheme began with "No. 311 draws the elegant gold watch," Mr. Jennison again arose, and said, in his peculiar voice, he "should never desert Ophelia's grave for forty thousand brothers." "No. 311," repeated the man of fate, "draws the elegant gold watch"—and here he paused and surveyed the multitude. Mr. Jennison fairly blazed, and getting up on the chimes of a headless meal barrel, he swung his hat in ecstasy, in spite of all opposition. "The elegant gold watch — key," said the heartless man; whereat Mr. Jennison closed up like a jack-knife, and sitting down suddenly in the meal barrel, he buried his ruby nose in his palpitating bosom, and tears bedewed his shirt.

A FEW months ago, as I was nearing the imposing structure known as "one-ninety-seven," I noticed a healthy specimen of humanity, wearing a suit of fallish looking clothes which had evidently been "wet" a good deal, and had shrunk in consequence. It was a bitter, cold day, and as the object of my attention stood there shivering on the high stoop with his hands forced down to the deepest recesses of his pantaloons pockets, a thought flashed through my mind that it must be that Roman gentleman so well known to the fraternity

at large—Mr. Hankus Gowanus. Meeting a friend just then, I said: "I never saw Hankus Gowanus in my life, but I'll bet you a Knox hat that's he." I should have won the stake if my wager had been accepted. As we came up, Hankus placed a brawny hand on each of us, and said: "Well, Jim, how are things? Don't know either of you by name, but if you work up-stairs you are all right, bet your life. Know me? Everybody knows me; Hankus Gowanus, old times rocks, Union Pacific Railroad, contemporaneous with Ed. Schermerhorn, Dan Murray, and other talent in the rough," and he let go a lively stream of the salivary juice to give weight to his declaration. Mr. Gowanus informed us that he had dined with a wedding party at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and intended to go back to Ohio by the evening train. Discovering, from his breath, that whatever the merits of the ebibles had been, that there was no doubt about the abundance of the liquid comforts, we excused ourselves and got away. The next day I saw him leaning up against the steam pipes in the vestibule as I passed out to lunch. He looked very woe-begone, having evidently dined considerably since our last meeting; and, as I didn't wish to embarrass him, I was preparing to give him a wide berth when I heard him bawling, "Hi, Jim! hi, Jim!" The customers leisurely writ-

ing at the little desks looked up, and a lady who was bargaining for a money transfer, uttered a little cry. I could do no less than walk out to where Hankus was standing and give him my attention. He proceeded immediately to business.

"Do you observe anything wrong about these visuals of mine?" he asked.

"A little bloodshot, perhaps," I replied.

"Oh, no, not that. I mean anything queer—off, you know—snakes, or anything like that?"

I assured him that I did not, whereupon he said: "Give me your fist; don't know you, but you know me, and that settles it. I want to talk to you confidentially. I thought I seen a ghost here a little bit ago. You know Eity—'the boy, George'—the only Eitemiller. Well, sir, I was standing right over there a little while ago and in he walked. Not limping, mind you, like he used to, but straight as a string. Two good, gallus legs as mine are, plug hat, good clothes, and faked up till you can't rest."

I told him that Mr. Eitemiller was in Hartford, but he said he "wouldn't have it. Couldn't fool *him*—known the boy too long.

"Did you speak with him?" I inquired.

"Well, *now*, I weaken. I thought he was a ghost, and I just stood and stared at him, but he never tumbled to me. Gave me the dead

shake, and kinder took me in as much as to say, 'Why I don't know you from a side of sole leather.' "

At this juncture Hankus gave a sudden start, and striking an attitude that would do honor to Mr. Booth when the ghost of Hamlet's father appears, he said. "Look there—take in that fresh leg."

I looked, and saw just stepping out of the elevator, Mr. Harry Hyde, of the Auditor's Department, the gentleman whose striking resemblance to the man who never "lost his grip," except for one brief hour at the Hoboken ball match, has surprised many before and since Mr. Gowanus came on from Ohio to participate in the wedding festivities, dine at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and lay for ghosts and goblins.

THE good people of Maguffinsville who attend the First Congregational Church were all disappointed last Sunday, for Mrs. Carver, their sweet soprano, was absent from her accustomed place in the choir. Many are the Sabbaths that have glided into the past since Mrs. Carver, then a blushing bride, came to captivate all ears and win all hearts by her tones of bell-like melody and the thousand graces which inform her gentle nature; but many as they

had been, never before had she been numbered among the absentees. The previous evening Mr. Carver brought home, among other concomitants of a frugal banquet, a bottle of horseradish, and he observed, as he upset the milk in the pickles in an attempt to uncork the bottle with a cleaver, that he was satisfied that he had got something now of a genuine and appetizing quality. When the bottle was opened, and the dried beef had been passed, Mr. Carver helped himself sparingly to the fiery compound, and ejaculated in tones of evident disgust, "Turnips, by Jingo! and that precious grocery keeper warranted it pure. Pure turnips, more likely." Mrs. Carver, now all compassion, tested the compound. She bailed out a teaspoonful and closed her pretty lips over it with all the dear simplicity of beguiled, maltreated, but ever trusting womankind. And as her eyes began to protrude, Carver thought he had perpetrated a great joke. The horseradish was first proof, and would have burnt a hole through an Orange county cheese inside of seven seconds. Mrs. Carver threw her head back and her feet forward and fell to so steadfastly contemplating the kitchen ceiling, that Carver thought she fancied it hard finish, and had just discovered her error, so he stopped laughing suddenly and went over to ask her about it. The demonstrations for the next

three hours were rather vigorous, and Mrs. Carver sang several new airs in a key even higher than usual, and succeeded in astonishing her most ardent admirers who quickly assembled, and the feminine portion of whom got her safely to bed. Meantime a youthful physician took it out of Carver by sending him after such a medley of curatives at such a medley of places as were never fetched before. But morning dawned at last, and the poor joker, emaciated, travel-stained, repentant, his errands finished, took that bottle of horseradish and dumped it on the ash heap.

It is reported that when a Washington correspondent called on our valiant Secretary of the Interior to obtain his views on the personal appearance of Mrs. Belknap, Mr. Chandler rose to the importance of the occasion and said that she wore her dresses very low in the neck, and he added that he liked low-necked dresses outside of his own family. Most people like a quiz in pretty much the same way. He is a very amusing and clever person to know, provided he does not select his victims too near home. Artemus Ward was, perhaps, the greatest quiz in our time. Mark Twain tells us that the first time he met the celebrated humorist, Artemus invited him to have a whisky cock-

tail. Mark declined on the ground that a whisky cocktail always flew to his head and made him as useless as a rotten stick. This was enough for Artemus. He insisted on the whisky cocktail being brought, and with protests Mark gulped it down. As soon as he was outside of it, Artemus assumed a look of superhuman earnestness, and began to make inquiries about silver mining, talking the most plausible nonsense about ores, veins, castings of granite, formations, shafts, ledges, layers, bridges, sulphurets, the medium of forces, remote agencies, etc., until Mark, thinking it was the whisky which prevented him from grasping the subject, jumped from his chair and pacing wildly about, said: "I don't understand any more than a clam; that cussed whisky cocktail has done the business for me. The more you talk the more I don't get the hang of what you say." As he looked toward Artemus he espied a quiet smile lingering about his lips, and so ordered up more whiskys, and concluded that for once he had been disposed of at retail. On another occasion Artemus struck up an acquaintance on a Mississippi steamboat with a forbidding looking blue stocking, who said she was reading "*Le Roi Des Montagues*," and inquired if he read French. A friend who came to ask him to join in a cigar on the upper deck found him in a brown study, and the forbid-

ding female was staring at him hard enough to stop a Waltham watch. "Excuse me," said Artemus, looking up, "this lady was asking me if I read French. It is a serious question, and I am considering whether I do." She then went on to recount some points in the story, when Artemus interrupted her, and eyeing her sadly said: "Do you think the glorious sunshine in Greece is constitutional—that is to say, if early be the dream of youth, or more so with regard to it viewed morally? Because the *Ægean* is sea, a blue sea which might in parallel instances, but before breakfast. Always before the morning meal. You agree with me, I hope?" And he smiled and bowed politely. She looked as horror struck as if she had been told at 2 A. M. to answer Chicago for San Francisco cables. And as her questioner moved off he observed in a deploring tone of voice, "Blue Greeks — blue *Ægean* brigands, dead before their breakfast." But what I set out to say is, that the telegraphic profession does not lack men whose great delight lies in an opportunity to guy somebody. It seems to be an element of character which the business fosters and develops wonderfully. One of the keenest of this ilk was Mr. Joseph Hurley, who worked at No. 145 Broadway, a year or so ago. For a long time I regarded him as a theological student, but he came out strong on several occasions

and established a reputation as a wit, which, I dare say, follows him to the sunny South, whither he has gone. A good many who read this will remember the days when "what do you sign?" succeeded "report about the usual bulk" as the office joke. Briefly stated, this inquiry became a by-word from the fact that visiting artists from the country when taken around the office and confronted with different operators who were introduced as Oney Gagin, Hank Cowan, Jim Lawless, Ed. Schermerhorn, Tip McClosky, etc., would invariably inquire "What do you sign?" and on being told "Ms," "Bw," "Ew," "N," and so on, would put forth their flipper and say, effusively: "Put it there 'Ms,' or 'Bw,' etc.—know you like a brother." When memorial day came around last year, "what do you sign" was in the zenith of its popularity. A number of the "boys," among whom was Hurley, were present at one of the cemeteries where graves were being decorated. When the cavalcade had proceeded, Hurley stepped up to a glum looking old chap connected with the place and inquired, in a faltering voice, "Can you tell me, good sir, where Kirby lies buried?" He was told that no grave of a man bearing that name was thereabout. Then, after a pause, Joe observed in breaking tones: "It might please you, sir, to know his sig.—he signed K.

And the "gang" moved on, leaving the old man dazed and groping.

AMONG my friends in Maguffinsville is Mr. John Gaylord, the druggist, and at his store I find great diversion. To illustrate, I will relate one incident which came under my observation there the other day.

A boy had been loitering around the store and about the counter, on which were the candy-jars, for some time. A man less suspicious than Mr. Gaylord would have feared that the youth was trying to steal something, but not so with my friend. He retained his place at the rear of the store and continued his observations on men and things, as unruffled as if each jar had been supplied with a steel-trap attachment. Presently that boy passed out of the door as if he had been shot out of a howitzer, tore over across the way at an alarming pace, and dived into a grocery store. Next we saw him emerge from a side door into the yard, and the attention he then paid to the product of a chain pump showed that he hadn't the hydrophobia, at all events. The quantity of water which he poured into him, and then threw out again, was about three times as much as there is in the Mississippi River, and his maneuvers were even more astonishing than

those of a perjured witness under the scalpel of the cross-examiner. "Well, I swow," said Gaylord, finally, "I s'posed all the boys knew I had Cayenne lozengers in them air jars;" and then he danced around and laughed until his thirty-two dollar set of artificial teeth dropped on the floor and broke into flinders, when he smiled no more.

CAPTAIN CHARLES DE COSTA, whose name has already been mentioned in these pages, was a man, as has been indicated, who had no pronounced scruples about changing his base of operations. He had no abiding faith in the theory that

"We may fill our houses with rich sculptures and rare paintings,
But we can not buy with gold the old associations."

To him old associations were not of particular importance, and he never bought anything with gold—or currency, even—which he could purchase on credit, and having no house he filled it not with paintings either rare or otherwise, or sculptures rich or poor. In short, he was a rolling stone who gathered no Morse except what was transmitted to him, but he gathered that with an ease and grace which has never been surpassed and seldom equalled. The captain not only drifted from "the rock

bound coasts of Maine to the golden sands of the Pacific" about once a year, but he also drifted to and fro from the service of the American Telegraph Company to that of railroad companies owning wires, and was never happier than when on the eve of transferring his valuable services from one corporation to another. Sometimes, I regret to say, his period of service was abruptly terminated by his employers without the formality of consulting his wishes, and he was left without visible means of support for an indefinite length of time. It was during one of these dreary interregnums, which were by no means infrequent in his history, that he accosted a knot of telegraphers on Broadway one evening and asked for a loan—a small one. He said that it was likely to be a permanent if not a paying investment, and a purse of nine cents was finally made up for his benefit. "Now, if I pay my fare to Fiftieth Street, that will only leave me four cents for a beer," said De Costa, reflectively. "I'll go get the beer first and trust to luck to get up town on the other four cents. Thanks gentlemen, 'I owe you one,' as Dr. Ollapod would say; as a matter of fact, my beloved brethren, I owe you several. Good night." His friends watched him for a moment as he tripped gaily up the street, until he suddenly disappeared in the vicinity of a pair of posts surmounted with

red lamps, having "oysters" painted on them. Men much exhilarated, loud of voice, and inclined to burst into discordant song often came out between those lamp posts — an argument undoubtedly against the consumption of oysters. Later the captain came out and made his way as dignified as usual to a neighboring car stand. He took up a position on the front platform of the car, and before it started had invented a story which he thought would get him up to Fiftieth Street, where he had relatives, for four cents. But he had no occasion to tell it. For some unexplained reason the conductor didn't disturb him, and at Fiftieth Street De Costa left the car as light hearted as a bird. "I'll have to celebrate that piece of good fortune," he said. "But I can't beer up on four cents." He walked down the street, however, toward a lager beer garden. He must have been studying as he went, for, as he approached the bar, he blandly remarked to the man of juleps, smashes, etc: "Balmy evening, Jim; rather late home to-night for a pious citizen. Must correct my habits in deference to my early teachings, and return home earlier. By the way, my friend, would you do me the great kindness to lend me a cent?" Cap was an entire stranger to the bartender, but the request was so pleasantly made, the style of the applicant so breezy, and the loan asked so

small, that the fellow, though puzzled, was very glad to accommodate. "If you mean it, certainly sir," said he. "Mean it?" repeated Cap. "Do I look like a man who would jest?" The penny was handed over without further ceremony, and the captain fishing his four cents out of his pocket surmounted them with the borrowed one, pushed the column forward, and said, briskly, "Jim, give me a beer."

While he leisurely drank it the bartender watched him narrowly, and as De Costa sat the glass down the former dropped into the till the five cents which he had, meantime, held mechanically in his hand, and ejaculated: "Well, Sandy, that is pretty good, too. Have one with me." And he had one. It must have been three months after this that De Costa made his reappearance as a member of the regular night force at No. 145 Broadway. He had been receiving from some rapid sender in Washington all the evening, and about ten o'clock a number of the operators gathered about him and were admiring his beautiful copy. One of them who had been timing the sending finally said: "Good work; forty-three words a minute for the last five minutes." At this the captain opened his key for the first time that night, and feelingly said: "There is no merit in being a good telegrapher. It is born in some men just

as poetry is, or sweetness in a woman. But I'll tell you what *does* require brains; to get three beers and a ride home on a street car for nine cents. *I did that, fellow circuit busters,*" and then he told us how, as herein related.

IN one of the delightful sketches penned by Major Winthrop, author of "Canoe and Saddle," "Cecil Dreme" and other charming books, it is narrated that as one of the early regiments was about leaving New York for the seat of war, the equanimity of the officers in command was considerably disturbed by the turbulence of a high private in the rear rank, a regular Bowery production, who carried a small, ugly canine in his arms. His remarks were addressed to the crowd of spectators, and were confined to this one inquiry: "I say, bully, will some ere feller take this ere dawg." Although this episode is wholly irrevelant to what I am about to tell, it is suggested by a local incident, probably because both have a "dawg" foundation. There resides in Maguffinsville a youth of tender years, whose consuming ambition for a long time has been to possess a canine. I am not advised as to whether he preferred poodle, mastiff, or spaniel, or the "yallar dog" which Dr. Holmes makes figure so prominently in "Elsie

Venner," but it was a dog at all events. Unfortunately for our youthful hero, his parents did not consider a dog requisite to the happiness of their chubby offspring, and so the matter rested until the other day, when our little friend, like William Nye, renowned in song, took matters into his own hands. On his way to the paternal domicile, he encountered the defunct body of somebody's whilom favorite, frozen as stiff as a patent poker. Manfully he took the deceased in his arms and tugged him home. The load was heavy, but the little fellow was armed with a motive, and the word "fail" was erased from his vocabulary. In course of time he reached the ancestral shades of his father's residence, and greeted his astonished mother with the information that he had got a dog at last. He knew he was frozen, but he purposed to thaw him out and have him for his own. Narratives of how snakes are roused from the lethargy produced by cold, when heat is applied, had probably given him a hypothesis for his theory, but though he was sanguine of success, and deserved it for his pains, it is quite needless to add that the spirit of that doggy still soars in infinite space.

THERE could be no better illustrations of the progressiveness of the age than are afforded



every day in the routine of a telegraphist's duty. Time was, and I remember it sadly, when your provincial novice did not plume himself on his familiarity with the ways of city men. Content was he to have a bumy tig entering his meager business and in relaxing his mind ever and again by such enjoyment as the work of replenishing his local battery afforded. But that was far back in the azure tinted past, when bucolic he and pastoral she, if they essayed to master the mysteries of the art at all, took their business by a register like Christian people, made no harassing remarks, and were polite to that degree that they always said, "O. D., thank you," whenever you sent them a message. Those were halcyon days, truly, but the world moves in more ways than one, and the methods of men and women change correspondingly. How often, alas! in the degenerate present, are we awed into that indescribable frame of mind, by the fantastic behavior of the modern beginner, which causes the fountains of speech to dry up precipitately and plunges us into that peculiar agony which overcomes us, only, when we are forced to leave the observations of another unresponded to. It is a phase in life's fitful fever involving the same principle which enters into the story about the man who was driving up a long and steep hill with a load of potatoes. As he neared

the summit the tail board of the cart came out and away went the thirty bushels of esculents in thirty different directions. "Did you swear?" inquired a sympathizer to whom had been related the details of the mishap. "Swear?" repeated the victim, "swear! why, I knew on the start I couldn't do the subject justice, so I jest held in." I have been led into this desultory, and, I fear, not very entertaining train of thought, by a little episode happening just across the aisle, and within earshot, as I sit dating some red blanks preparatory to the grand rush, soon to commence.

Fred Catlin, of the St. Louis "quad," has agreed to work from 5:30 until 6 o'clock for a way man, and he sails airily down the room to the vicinity of a rather "rocky" railroad wire, with that beatific expression of countenance that fits so well the face of the perfect telegrapher, and which can no more be counterfeited by a base pretender, than the look which obtains on the face of the man whose turn is next in a crowded barber shop. Fred scans the solitary message on the hook, devotes himself for a moment to the list of calls tacked up before him, and having selected his man he proceeds to raise him. The office responds promptly, when the following dialogue ensues:

Cat. (Scrutinizing the number sheet.)—"I

don't see your place down here; what is the next number, please?"

Office.—"Your next number is 1."

Cat.—"Thank you. No. 1, New York 9th to —."

Office.—"Please sqe."

Cat. (Disgusted of course.)—"I sign &."

Office.—"Never heard you on here before. Where did they dig you out? That's a hot sig. Ha! Ha!"

Cat.—"Pls take this: No. 1 New York 9th to —."

Office.—"Look here young fellow *is that message city or through?*"

"MAJOR FEENEY," said a dignified police justice one morning, "You are charged with being down drunk. I am amazed, Major, that a man with a soldier's record should ever become intoxicated; but what especially pains me is, that a man of your intelligence should drink himself so drunk within a block of his own house that he couldn't reach home without falling by the wayside. Major Feeney, what have you to say for yourself?"

"May it plaze the court," replied the Major, majestically, but with a sly twinkle in his eye, "I am sinsible of me misdemanor, but I wad sthate in silf defince, that it was not the lighth

of the road which exhasted me, but the width of it."

It was the width of the road also which confounded Mr. Jennison of Maguffinsville and his friend Trenholm of Newark. They had been out to dinner and were returning home about midnight. There was no moon, and it was with extreme difficulty that they kept on the sidewalk. Presently they tried the middle of the street, but their success was no better, and finally both fell. Getting up independently of each other they became separated in the dark, and at the end of five minutes each had struggled to a lamp post, but these posts were on opposite sides of the street. Mr. Jennison was the first to discover that he was solitary and alone, and he peered into the darkness for Trenholm. Espying a human form across the way, he straightened himself up and inquired, "William, my dear boy, is that you over there?" The reply came back in thick, irresolute tones, "Yessur, Warrington, its your olefren Willyum." "Willie," continued Mr. Jennison, "come (hic) over here." The reply was mournful but decisive. "Oh, I can't come over there, Warry. *I can't* stay where I am."

A FRIEND writes me asking what I think about consistency being a jewel, and states

that a low salaried operator in the office where he works, who has a wife and family of little ones, had, up to within a short time, aroused the sympathies of his fellows by his forlorn condition and undoubted poverty. All the men in the office who had any cast-off clothing to dispose of bestowed it on the needy fellow, and many of the operators took a holiday oftener than they could afford just for the sake of giving their worthy associate a chance to make a little "extra." When, however, the conversation turned upon prize chickens the other day, and the impoverished victim of dull times and a large family stated it as his opinion that he owned a pair of about the likeliest roosters in that neck of timber, for which he had recently paid twenty-five dollars, there came a lull in the conversation, and the boys looked unutterable things at each other.

THE above reminds me of another similar case, which, though not strictly in our line, will no doubt be appreciated, since it affects one of the guild standing very near us—a journeyman printer. An out and out "tramp," in broken boots, soiled shirt, and a very discouraged looking suit of clothes, dropped into the composing room of a Rhode Island daily one day, and said he wanted some "subbing." He was

worn out, he added, had walked from Worcester, and hadn't had a square meal in a week. One of the typos "put him on," and giving him half a dollar, told him to go and get something to eat and come around at seven o'clock sharp for "composition." The "tramp" shuffled off, but shuffled back again at seven o'clock, and began to pile up the type at a rate of speed that made the heads of the other chaps fairly swim. He gave his whole attention to business, and as he snaked a "fat ad." off the hook, which all the others had been working for dear life to get hold of, some one ventured to say that he was doing pretty well for a starter.

"Yes, tolerably well," he replied, as he skipped back to his "case" and "set up" a line in about a second. "Doing as good as I generally do when I am short of rations. I am as hungry as a shark to-night."

"Hungry," repeated two in chorus. "Why, haven't you had your dinner?"

"Yes, a sort of dinner," he remarked, "but an empty comp. can't spread himself on fifteen cents, you know."

"*Fifteen* cents," said another, in surprise. "He said he gave you a half a dollar."

"So he did," responded the "tramp," as he reached for a ffi, "but I paid out thirty-five of it for getting my mustache colored."

The musical click of the types as they were

dropped into the sticks was all that broke the stillness in that office for the next half hour.

SWING ON.

Swing on, old wire, swing on!
Foul all the rest, I pray—
All wires that skirt the way.
What though I do not get a dot?
What if of bulls I make a lot?
What though I wish this biz to pot?
Never *you* mind! swing on.

Swing on, old wire, swing on!
For bulls I like to pay—
And many I've made this day.
What though bum clothes I have to wear?
And clear to Harlem pay my fare?
What though a quad. 's a frightful snare?
Never *you* mind! swing on.
[*It swings on.*]

WHILE the gorgeous spectacle of "Ahmed" was running at the Grand Opera House, a little boy between three and four years of age, who had been brought to a matinee performance by his parents, attracted considerable attention by his original and pungent observations on the peculiar phases of the play. When the ballet took their places for the grand *ensemble* the light attire of *danseuses*, nymphs, and coryphees caught the wondering eye of the youth-

ful theater goer, and enchained his tongue in silence for a moment. Just as the dancers were posing, however, and when the profoundest silence reigned, his little voice at an excited pitch, was heard throughout the house, inquiring: "Oh! mummer, are they going in to swim?" It was a fearful commentary on the drama as developed in this nineteenth century, and an old gentleman sitting near me said something between his subdued laughter about "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings."

WHEN one of the present New York force was working out west, he served under J. B., a very eccentric and dignified chief operator, who used to go out and hoist in the "pizen" with the boys when all hands had got "30." He was a particular friend of the chap at my elbow, and it was pretty hard work a good many mornings for either of them to tell which was J. B., and which was "t'other un." But, however serious the debauch, the chief was invariably at his post at night-fall, and apparently as sober as a deacon, while his friend quite frequently found himself unfit for service. One night the latter awoke with a fearful headache, and thinking it useless to attempt to go to work, he scrawled a note saying he was ill, and sent it to the office. He had barely put

himself outside of a glass of Seltzer, when he received the following reply, which rather startled him by its Johnsonian style and apparent earnestness :

Office ——— Telegraph Company,
———— April 24, 187—

SIR :

You are drunk. This folly has been repeated to the detriment of the service much too often, and a recurrence of the offense must result in your peremptory discharge. I can not, and will not, tolerate it any longer.

Yours, J. B.

P S. *Where will you be at nine o'clock? I am on it.*

It seems scarcely necessary to say that the postscript was about the sweetest morsel that ever followed an official signature ; nor need I add that at nine o'clock precisely there was a telegraphic re-union on a small scale at the Occidental.

OLD MR. HARRINGTON, of Maguffinsville, went to Newark, Monday, and bought a patent lock for his barn. He said he wanted it for the "eend door," and explained that boys got in there nights and "cut up." Wednesday, when the lock had been adjusted to the door, Mr. Harrington went out to "fodder the critters," and left the door open with the key on the outside. A sudden gust of wind blew the door to, and there being no means of affecting the lock

from the inside, he became a prisoner. Finally his wife, who had wearied of waiting for him, came over from across the street where Mr. Harrington's house stands, and called to him. He responded, and said if she didn't open that door and let him out she'd hear from him. After a moment she found the key in the grass where it had fallen when the door slammed, and then she tried and tried to unlock the door, but she was nervous and her husband made her more so by his sarcastic and abusive remarks through the hole where the latch string used to be, and at last she grew red in the face and went home in a huff. About nine o'clock Mr. Harrington arrived at the house in a sorry condition—he having made his exit through a small window in the barn cellar. Being a corpulent gentleman he had a hard time of it getting through the narrow aperture, and would, perhaps, have been sticking there yet, but for the fact that a couple of goats kept in the cellar ate off his coat-tails, and were attacking the remainder of his wardrobe with great vigor, thus accelerating his progress outward. Lowell's Ode, read at the Lexington Centennial celebration, and just published in the *Atlantic*, which Mr. Harrington had brought home to read to his wife, was neglected that evening, and bitterness and rancor shone in his eye until bed-time.

THEY worked down in a branch office. One was an American girl and the other, far back in the dear and mellow past, owed her origin to Irish blood. The former was forever endeavoring to impress her friend with a sense of her greatness, and often succeeded in wounding the supreme sensitiveness of her co-laborer. But one day—a sad, fateful day in the calendar of one of them—there occurred an exchange of courtesies which settled forever the question of who was to be mistress of the situation henceforward. It was merely one of those episodes in real life which many of us have watched, wherein a patient and submissive mind has been domineered over beyond the limit of its endurance, and a word spoken at the wrong moment has aroused a latent power or a spark of wit which had its fitting effect and put matters on their proper basis for all time. On the day in question a note was sent across the room to her of Irish propensities with an idea of arousing her envy, which read as follows :

“I have matinee tickets for the grand opera on Saturday, and don’t know the way to the Academy. Which cars shall I take?”

A moment later the answer came back, brief, but satisfying :

“I am sorry I can not tell you about the cars. *I have always reached the Academy by carriage.*”

IN Gaylord's drug store at Maguffinsville, the other day, a gentleman who had been connected with establishing the old National line of stage coaches through the West was narrating to some friends how, on one occasion when their own team was broken down, the wagon of a farmer had been appropriated by some of the surveying party, whereat the latter was considerably incensed. The gentleman who was telling the story was then in command of the men, and, returning to the scene of the accident and disturbance, sought to allay the farmer's indignation, telling him no harm was intended, that the use of the wagon was actually necessary, and would be paid for with pleasure, etc. This put a different face on the matter, completely taking the starch out of the man of agricultural pursuits, who hemmed, and hawed, and asked if the gentleman thought twenty-five cents would be too much. He was rewarded with a shining half dollar, and a silver quarter was bestowed on each of his tow-headed progeny, of whom there were seven or eight standing about. As the gentleman went on with his story a strong-bodied, rough-visaged Teuton, who sat waiting in the window seat for a prescription to be put up, expressed the liveliest interest in the narrative, and seemed to grasp the essence of all the humor there was in it. And when the gentleman concluded by telling

how surprised and delighted the whole family was, and said that the half dollar to the old fellow and the quarters to the children came like sunshine in a shady place into their simple lives, the face of cousin German indicated plainly that the tender spot way down in his heart of hearts was touched. The gentleman, perceiving he had entrapped one more auditor than he had counted on, made his acknowledgments, as a matter of courtesy, by turning to Dutch and saying, blandly, "Those were primitive times, you know, *primitive* times, sir."

"Yah, dot is so," responded old mahogany head, "*dose railroads ish hell.*"

MANY of my readers are familiar, no doubt, with the story of the sensation created in Syracuse some years ago, by the *Star* publishing what Jack Selden told its credulous local editor by wire one Sunday night about Barnum, the giraffe, and the Old Number Five hand engine. If there be any who are not, let them seek out that genial telegraphist, fisherman, and philosopher, and get the story from his own lips; no one else could do it the shadow of justice. But there have been other instances in which newspapers have been made the victims of circumstances owing their origin

to telegraphic causes. Some years ago a rural reporter for the Associated Press sent to the New York Agency a dispatch, as follows:

“Thomas Barnard was found lying by the roadside near here yesterday, apparently frozen to death. Arrangements were made for his burial, when, to the surprise of the authorities, he revived just as he was being lowered into the grave. To-night he is sitting in the Central Station thinking of earthly things.”

I can not attempt to explain what the author of that dispatch meant by his concluding words. I remember in earlier years, when an *attache* of a struggling morning paper, that our editor-in-chief, who had been a minister abroad under President Buchanan, and whose circle of friends was large, occasionally came back to the editorial room under the influence of considerably more champagne than he could conveniently manage. On these occasions he invariably attempted a “leader” on some sublime theme, and not unfrequently he would call one of us to him, and in his dignified and pleasant manner would say: “Read that (pointing to what he had written), and see if it’s all straight.” On being told it was straight enough, but that it ended in the middle of a sentence, he would close one eye in a most comical manner, and remark, confidentially: “That’s it, that’s it, my son; I’ve soared so

high I can't light in my present condition." In other words, the wine being in, the wit was out, and he hadn't the requisite clearness of head to bring to an intelligible close what had been so bravely begun. The correspondent alluded to above was, I infer, in a similar predicament from a lack of experience in rounding sentences, or from some other cause, and having got his man into the station house, knew of nothing to add except "thinking of earthly things."

Without discussing that point further, suffice it that the dispatch came to hand in the form given, and though editors of press telegrams are supposed to be educated in a sort of Grad-grind school, and to be men of facts, with no element of sentiment or humor in them, they do sometimes depart from the straight and narrow path in which they generally plod their way. This was a case in which the temptation to let a good thing go intact was yielded to, and so the dispatch got refiled for Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, and the West generally, without undergoing a curtailment of its funny part. The "boys" along the line recognized its humorous side, and each had something to say. The operator at Chicago "opened" and made some flippant remark, which New York did not catch, owing to the high adjustment of Cleveland's repeater. The

natural result was that New York asked Cleveland: "What did he say?" To which the latter replied, petulantly. "Oh, go on; he said he would take sugar in his." New York, with a laconic "i, i," proceeded, and no more was thought of the matter until the next week, when quite a little disturbance was raised, and an inquiry instituted on the basis of the following, which had appeared in a Pittsburg paper:

"Thomas Barnard was found lying by the roadside near here yesterday, apparently frozen to death. Arrangements were made for his burial, when, to the surprise of the authorities, he revived just as he was being lowered into the grave. To-night he is sitting in the Central Station thinking of earthly things. He says he will take sugar in his."

During the war of the rebellion I remember a similar occurrence, though hardly as funny. New York was sending an account of a battle, and was saying: "His horse was shot from under him," when some one "broke" and said "g. a horse." New York, evidently disgusted with the frequent breaking, did not proceed, and a mischievous chap of my acquaintance, who was reading Dr. Holmes' "Elsie Venner," and who was much taken with the narrative in that part where Bernard Langdon shoots Dick Venner's horse as that worthy attempts to throw the fatal lasso over Bernard's head,

opened his key and went ahead from the book: "And the wild horse of the pampas was buried 'neath the turf by the wayside in the far off New England." The description of the battle appeared that afternoon in the *Fall River News* as follows:

"His horse was shot from under him. And the wild horse of the pampas was buried 'neath the turf by the wayside in the far off New England. At least three thousand prisoners," etc.

MR. SIMONSON, of Maguffinsville, had donned his dressing gown and slippers and settled himself in front of a glowing fire one damp evening not long since, when he was aroused by a jerk at the door-bell that made him feel instinctively for his scalp, the Modoc excitement being at its height at the time. It was peculiarly aggravating, as his girl Bridget had trotted out on her ear the day before, and Mrs. Simonson had just got the two youthful scions of the house into the bed, and well converted to Morpheus, and had taken up a position near her lord to listen to the good things contained in the *Atlantic*. The scions awoke with one accord and a concert was at once inaugurated, as that bell let loose the dogs of war and wagged its tongue in very ecstasy. There was a din in the man-

sion of the Simonsons, and the head of the family arose in his wrath, and had it not been that the axe was in the cellar, he would probably have taken it along to receive the nocturnal disturber of his peace with. "With iron strides," as the dime novels say, he reached the door to find himself confronted by a stalwart negress, whom he had engaged through an intelligence office agent to succeed the departed Bridget, but whom he had never met. There she stood grinning from ear to ear, and as he stood there aghast at the black apparition, she wagged her head from side to side, and peered into the hall as if looking for something or somebody in the background. She paid no attention to him until a decided, "Well, what is it?" brought her to the point, and she replied rather indignantly: "I'se here to see Susan Sampson, an' I doesn't want nuffin of you." Susan Sampson was as near to the name as she had been able to get, and she was quickly apprised of her error, and at once installed among the kettles of the kitchen. A neighbor who knew of the episode once said to her, playfully, that he believed her name was Susan Sampson. She gave him one look, and expostulated as follows: "Now, boss, look hyar, it makes me just weak to have that mistake alluded to. I done want to hear no more about it;" and there was a determination in

the way she said it, so suggestive of a kettle of suet pudding flying through the air, or a spider skurrying in the direction of his devoted head, that he never mentioned it again. "Discretion," etc., as Falstaff says, deterred him.

ABOUT the 20th instant (March, 1873), a vote was taken at No. 145 Broadway, to learn whether or not it was the wish of the majority to adopt the Continental alphabet, or adhere to the much abused but undeniably musical characters known as the spaced letters. The result was a largely predominating number of nays. But this did not settle it. Rumors were at once rife that General Eckert had signified his intention of agitating the adoption of the English alphabet, and everybody began trying his hand with it. On the Pittsburg wire Mr. Tierney proceeded to use it quite successfully. The day man on the Cincinnati duplex was puzzled by being answered "ii — J" instead of "C," and everywhere the changed letters seemed to have got the mastery of the operators.

The genial Gilbert Q. Olmstead, whose melodious "answer on number hi ji" so often cleaves the night air from the region of No. 17 South, was melancholy at the thought that the merry jingle of "ox" would be heard no more,

under the new dispensation. "Alas," he quoth in effect, "that I should bid farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness, and be known in the future by the unlettered appellation of '59'" A youth to whom this office is comparatively "fresh fields and pastures new," was sent to relieve "ox" for supper. After a while he concluded that "patience had ceased to be a virtue," and reported that he couldn't start that press on No. 17; he had called Philadelphia twenty minutes and all he could get out of him was, "i, i, — Wait." Here was Continental with a vengeance, for "i i — 1" is really "i i — P." Another youngster whose toilet is one of the wonders of the nineteenth century, was found weeping at an unused desk, and when questioned, replied that he couldn't stay in the business, if, under any new order of things, a pretty girl was to be mentioned as a "1 fetty gifx."

Whether the Continental shall be adopted or not, remains to be seen, but in any case it will only require a few weeks' practice to master it, and whatever other vexations may come out of the change, there is this consolation: It will be decidedly inconvenient for the Shelleys, the Reynoldes, the De Graws, the Boileaus, the Ayreses, the Mareans, the Stanfords, the Kettleses, and Merrills to "sush" us, and that is a point not to be ignored by men of family ties

and claims, to whom telegraphing long since lost its romance, and to whom the business now seems very much "like a tale that is told."

"Its no use talking," observed conductor Longworthy one night, as we drove away from City Hall. "I can stand having my rights trampled on by a nigger, I can put up with the blooming Celestial, the flannel mouth, and your Italian lazaronny, but when it comes to being called a pock-marked son of a sea cook, an attenuated scion of podsnappery, and a plum with a mug on him like a skunk skin drawn over a gunlock, when it comes to this at twenty cents a trip, I feel like being stuffed with straw, painted yellow, and set up in the Hippodrome as a female Colossus." Having delivered himself of this sentiment, he remained silent for a few minutes and I smoked my cigar placidly. Presently, after gazing at the moon and stars he said, in reply to some remark of mine about the Beecher trial: "Speaking of this Beecher scandal, I hope the old man will come out all right, I do indeed. There is that about Henry Ward which commands my admiration. He reminds me, sir, of what Oliver Goldsmith says in the 'Deserted Village' about his father:

'As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swell from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.'

The car stopped. Two or three men were shouting and gesticulating on the curb stone, but gave no sign of approaching until Longworthy called out: "If yer coming, come long, der yer want me to bring the car over to yer?"

ONE of the New York day chiefs had been moving his household goods and gods, and during his absence Mr. Sam Bogart, then an operator, had officiated at the switch with all his pristine grace. He had been the veriest artist with crosses, grounds, and escapes, and had chatted about ohms, megohms, resistance, and induction, with all the familiarity that your true New York waiter exhibits with the subject of ancient eggs, when he startles you by translating your order for three hard boiled, into "chicken buds three times." But you know what Iago or Othello or Desdemona or some other of those misguided people who figure in the "Moor of Venice" says:

"Be thou chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
Thou shall not escape calumny."

Sam was no exception to this rule. With all his endeavors to run the thing ship-shape, his

mode of proceeding was questioned by one of the linemen, in a note which I reproduce *verbatim*:

NEW YORK, April, 1873.

Mr. Samuel Bogert: It is my duty to inform you that you are placed in a very trust-worthy position in this great office where I can say that the news of the world passes to and fro but friend bogert you may thank your good conduct and intal-agance to be in the great position where you now stand but friend bogert it is my painfull duty to say to you now that you maid a great mistake some time past you sent me on 10 West for cross between 145 Broadway and 30th Street putting my hole confidence in the chief operators for nature of fault and location which I find them mos correct friend bogert I started on 10 West looking for a cross straining every nerve in my hole sistom and to my great surpris I found it laying against the side of a Hous in Canal street friend bogert you should have a care for your own sake and mine very well I shust say shurely a child must creep before it can walk for your time you are doweing well you are a credit to the land that gave you berth you can sit on your stool and converse with your fellow man in every part of the world and the continent of Aurope, the same as face to face friend bogert you ought to be very carefull in your movements you are watched by your chief, by the manager of this great office down to the linemen and humble tom finegan that picks the scraps of paper from your feet so friend bogert I will conclude by saying good-by for the present.

I remain your friend

THE other day a fashionably dressed young man, wearing a cane and sporting a bright nosegay in the button-hole of his glossy Prince Albert coat, stepped into Gaylord's drug store

at Maguffinsville, and approaching the clerk, began in a pleasant way :

“What have you got for a spring medicine—something for the blood, you know?”

The accommodating clerk suggested a preparation of sarsaparilla as about as valuable as anything, and handed down a bottle of that compound. After inquiring the price the young man read the label and directions with great care, and handing it back, said :

“Show me something better than that ; something sort of—I don’t mind the price so much.”

So the courteous clerk got down a preparation of Buchu at two dollars a bottle, another of iron and cod liver oil at three dollars a bottle, and so on until the top of the show case was strewn with panaceas for all the ills that flesh is heir to, ranging in price from one dollar to ten. He had just been descanting on the virtues of a four-dollar medicine which he had warmly recommended as “a mild and delightful aperient,” when his patron turned lightly on his heels, twirled his cane and his mustache alternately, for a moment, cast his beaming eye over the contents of the teeming shelves, and then humming a bar or two from “Rigoletto,” he came to right-about face once more and said :

“Well, business is business ; say, old man, gimme three cents’ worth of Epsom salts.”

IN books and dramas the wrong doers are ultimately defeated and thrown cowering into the street, or permitted to slink away to be lost forever to mortal gaze, while the virtuous invariably disport them as rosy lipped cherubim, and are frequently suspended aloft in an impossible bower of flowers, and red fire heightens the general whole. But in real life, alas! virtue and right step along the rough thoroughfare of human events like ordinary creatures, and vice and deceit often outstrip them in the world's regard. Satan generally holds just as good cards as the angels, and turns his share of trumps with annoying regularity, and sometimes with a facility most perplexing and inexplicable. The following preface is of sufficient merit, I trust, to introduce even as merry and fun loving a genius as my friend David Twist, who is an operator in a hotel office in an adjacent city. Among David's patrons is a wealthy and eccentric old gentleman who rides his hobbies to suit his fancy, with no one to say to him nay. One of his later whims was a desire to learn telegraphy. To facilitate his wishes in that regard, a wire was suspended at his expense from the hotel to his residence, a few squares away, and was duly equipped with a battery and instruments. He soon became a proficient in the art, manipulating a key very nicely and reading by sound quite well. One

of his favorite pastimes was to call up David, and say: "See if you can get this?" And then he would send some word like "Cicero," "Coerce," "Cycle," etc., with a disregard for spaces which rendered their being read a matter of no little difficulty. But as these words were usually pointed out to him by Mr. Twist as the thorns in the operators' daily path, David usually anticipated what was coming, and in telegraphic parlance he had never yet been "stuck." One day, the gentleman, who possessed some brains of his own, and who had given attention recently to the problem of spaces, came in and said: "I think I have got you now, David, and I'll bet you a bottle of champagne I'll 'stick' you!" Twist, who had been a frequent recipient of choice cigars and other luxuries at the hands of his friend, was willing to make the wager, though he expected to lose it, and quickly put forth his hand, and thus the compact was celebrated. The gentleman departed, and in about five minutes he was heard calling, and David answered him. Then came a gust of dots in which no letter was distinguishable except a "d" on the end. David opened the circuit and said very slowly, in imitation of an office boy who sometimes shook a key "for his own amazement," as Mrs. Partington would say, "I didn't get that. Wait a minute and Twist will be at leisure. Is now

busy with New York." Taking a pencil David figured a minute on what he had heard, and feeling confident he had worked it out, he called his friend and said very impatiently: "i i ga—T." Again the gust of dots with the letter "d," and David flashes back: "Ha! ha! Icicle reiced," which was quite correct. And afterward there sat in a Camden parlor one evening, a mischievous fellow with merrily dancing eyes, which looked lovingly down at a bumper of effervescing spirits as it bubbled at his lips. There may have been remorse in his breast sometimes at the deception he had practiced, but on this particular day, if any had lingered until then, it vanished to the tuneful clink

"Of the ice against the wine goblets brink."

For a fortnight there had been a mystery connected with a fashionable boarding house at Maguffinsville, which had well nigh proven the death of a number of nervous people in the house. The story of the mystery went abroad, too, and in all directions for several blocks away; certain superstitious ones had contracted a habit of looking back at the house as they shot past it, much as Tam O'Shanter is thought to have looked back at the witches as

his steed plunged into the night, and the festive old girls came riding on their broomsticks in hot pursuit. The cause of this difficulty was the arrival, early in the month, of a newly-married couple. The gentleman is described as a pleasant and lively fellow, and the wife as a frolicsome and winning creature, who looked as if her husband had always been all tenderness and love. Their relations at the table, in the parlor after tea, at church, at the theater, everywhere, in fine, where they have been seen together, were apparently harmonious, and those who did not know of the dark mystery lurking about their private lives, were impressed by their manner with the belief that they were very much in love, and certainly very much devoted to each other. No irregularity in their decorum had ever been noticed except in the morning. But along about the hour of rosy sunrise, when the boarders were "getting in their big licks" and snoring peacefully, there would come from the region of this couple's room the most singular sounds, which were kept up for an hour or so. These were followed uniformly by a lull, and then the pair would come down to breakfast as happy and peaceful in their seeming as the gentle dove. As the time passed things grew worse and worse, and no ray of light was let in to soften the increasing blackness. The boarders, who,



on hearing loud threats and lamentations, had only sat up in bed with their hair on end till matters quieted down, began now to gather in the corridors in scant attire, armed with shovels, tongs, curling-irons, Kehoe clubs, screwdrivers and fluting-irons, as charges of infidelity and the assurance in a male voice, that he would not shed her blood, followed by the ringing declaration—"Yet she must die!" pierced their unhappy ears. Then would follow a woman's screams, and a man's hoarse tones, evidently thick with passion. Anon, what sounded like a man seizing a woman by the hair and dragging her about the room, upsetting by the process the washstand, and such other articles as were within reach, coupled with her prayers and entreaties to desist, became the regular accompaniment of the "cock's shrill clarion," and the explosions which warn mankind of our approach toward the warm precincts of the cheerful day. This sort of business couldn't go on forever without an investigation, of course, and it didn't. One morning last week, when the indications convinced all present that murder most foul was to be perpetrated, a minion of the law was summoned, who, on hearing the distressful sounds, broke down the door without a word of parley, much to the admiration of the whole household who had clustered about him. But

they beheld no patient, long suffering woman weltering in gore, no fiend in human form gloating over his deed of blood. They simply saw a petite female figure in a red flannel night-dress, frantically endeavoring to crawl under the bed, and a very much surprised and thoroughly indignant husband attired in a light and airy costume, consisting of one slipper, one boot, a "plug" hat, and a night-shirt. He and his wife had been rehearsing for some private theatricals, and had flattered themselves they had been very quiet and unobtrusive about it.

Not a little money was put in the pockets of the Western Union Telegraph Company the other day in consequence of a difference of opinion existing between a Broad Street broker and Webster, relative to the orthography of the word he had set his combination safe on. Locking it at night and telling his clerks the word was "Prussia," he went off early next morning on a fishing excursion. The combination was as stubborn as a mule with a pedigree, and those clerks worked and perspired and indulged in expressions that were learned elsewhere than at their mother's knee, until they were as black in the face as a forgotten toast. Numerous telegrams exchanged later in

the forenoon revealed the fact that the man of margins, puts, and calls spelled the name of the German State just as he pronounced it—P-r-u-c-h-e. The mere mention of Bismarck is sufficient now to get him wild, and he orders a bottle of wine instinctively whenever his friends commence a remark with, "It is *safe* to presume," "It will be *safe*," etc., etc. That fishing excursion has cost him a thousand dollars so far, and he contemplates starting a "sample room" on his premises for the liquidation of his fellows' claims.

IF you have ever been in New York, of course you went to Central Park, and saw all the sights, including Shakspeare's statue. I stood admiring it one day, when a couple of feminine bucolics from Western New York came and stood near me. They didn't appear to care for my presence, however, for they finally moved directly in front of me, and whether my view was good or bad didn't concern them in any visible degree.

"Wall, now," said one, "who'n thunder is that feller, Sal?" alluding to the statue.

"I dunno," said the other, but his eyes is shet, whoever he air," she returned, as she gazed at the blank space usually left in statues in place of eyes; and they moved from the effigy of Avon's bard.

THE Germans can murder United States English pretty well, but the following, written by a Russian, and handed in at No. 21 Wall Street for transmission, the other day, is a little beyond the average Teutonic mix up:

To Alec Fink,
82 Morcket Street,
Pittsburgh Pa.

Pls ans. if you experience for me something for a place in Pittsburgh? and if is which in views. I hoping you will see if possible.

IN 1855 I accompanied a friend to New Haven, where he made a speech in favor of Freemont and Dayton. After the assemblage dispersed we went over to a friend's house to sleep. When we had disrobed, and were on the point of jumping into bed, we heard strains of music, and soon discovered that a serenade was in progress. After

"And we'll give 'em Jessie
When we rally at the polls,"

with bass-drum accompaniment, had waked the echoes, and other campaign airs had been given, a cornet solo, which was really fine, was rendered, the player choosing an air from "Il Trovatore." As he proceeded, I heard feminine voices in the adjoining apartment, and listening, I detected the dulcet tones of a young

lady—the most beautiful blonde I had ever seen—in conversation with her mother. She was a divine creature—the daughter—and on a previous visit I had fallen in love with her to the fullest extent of my ability. Alas! as Meredith says,

“Whom first we love,
You know, we seldom wed.”

“What’s that chune, Jen?” queried the mother.

“Why, that’s Martha,” returned my innamorata.

“Oh!” rejoined her mother, “from Faust.”

“Yes,” said the sweet lips I had so longed to kiss.

It may not be a source of satisfaction to the reader to know that that girl ultimately married a hatter with seven fingers, but it is to me. He uses her head now to block his hats on, and sometimes in my sanguine mood, I feel that those seven fingers occasionally agitate her phosphorescent locks.

If then, as some one holds, men lose their hearts through their eyes, and lovely woman theirs through their ears, alas for the blood circulator of Sarah Hodges. I am not acquainted with the lady, but can imagine her as something soft and airy, whose presence is like a

zephyr, whose cheek rivals the blush on a peach, not forgetting, either, that—

“She is the dark-eyed girl, with nut-brown curls.”

Mr. E. E. Kelley, of the Boston and Albany postal car, had a letter for Sarah pass through his hands the other day, and he showed the envelope to a newspaper man—that industrious striver to make the whole world kin. The superscription the missive bore was unique and touching, calculated, in fact, to make captive the gently throbbing heart of our fair manipulator of the mystic key, though it occurs to me that her correspondent evinces a greater affection for his dear Uncle Sam than for the object of his dreams. It is none of my business, of course, but I would presume to say to my gentle sister, on the plea of more numerous years and greater experience, that as she goes on living out the sweet existence for which Leigh Hunt sighed in vain—“A lodge in some vast wilderness”—Chelsea is the wilderness of the East, and it seems she lodges there—I would suggest, I say, that she remember the tenable ground taken by brusque King Henry, that he who can rhyme himself into woman’s affection, can generally reason himself out again. The superscription referred to was as follows:

“Dear Uncle Sam, this letter take
To the city of Lynn in the old Bay State,

At the Eastern Depot you will find
A handsome lass, both good and kind,
Who works the telegraph by day
And at night at Chelsea lodges,
She is the dark-eyed girl, with the nut-brown curls,
And her name is Sarah Hodges."

A NUMBER of colored men sent a telegram from Providence one day, and while waiting for an answer seated themselves in the broad window seat with their backs to the street. It was at the time of the Modoc excitement, and one of the messengers slyly placarded on the window the legend, on the back of a blank, "Imported Modocs." Everybody who came along stopped and read the placard, looked in, saw the point, and moved on with spirit gently moved. Quite a knot gathered at times until the hilarity became sufficient to attract the attention of the manager, when he at once removed the cause of their merriment (the card, not the darkies). In point of fact, nothing could remove them until they got their answer, which was late in the afternoon. They were so much engaged in discussing the ethics peculiar to the Ethiopian mind, that they were oblivious to the merriment of which they were the object, and will probably go down to their grave innocent of ever having personated the scalp lifting savages of the lava beds

ON Nassau Street, one afternoon, several men and boys were examining a lot of twenty-five cent books displayed on a temporary counter outside the door. Presently a clerk of the Bowery persuasion appeared on the scene and bellowed, "Annything on the board for twenty-five cents, *annnything* on the board for twenty-five cents." There were evidently no purchasers at hand, for all except a white-haired old man, who was eagerly reading a frayed and tattered copy of "Pollok's Course of Time" moved on. "Annything on the board for twenty-five cents," repeated the salesman in stentorian tones, and then he marched up to the old fellow and frightened him into the middle of next week by saying in an injured way: "Look here, young fellar, anny one would think by the way you are pawing things around yer was going to buy a house and lot."

THE steamer Rhein from Bremen, which arrived the other day, brought among other passengers a German lass of scarcely twenty years — healthy, plump, intelligent, and emphatically pretty. My attention was attracted to her by her forlorn appearance and thoughtful, tearful face as she stood outside the gate at Castle Garden, in conversation with one of the

clerks employed by the city, and who spoke her language. While the dialogue was in progress, quite a knot of loungers like myself gathered about. Among us was a long, lank Yankee, apparently thirty years of age, who, I have since learned, drives a dray for a firm on West Street. He manifested a lively interest in the case, and finally made bold to inquire :

“What’s the diffikilty, stranger?”

The interpreter replied that there was difficulty enough; the girl’s father had died on the voyage from Bremen, and had been buried at sea; she had landed heart-broken and friendless, and formed a new and hasty friendship with a man and woman who had promised to secure her a situation with a family on Third Avenue, but her friends had proved to be sharpers and had stolen her trunk. Thus she was thrust upon the cold charity of a strange city—in fine, the self-same story, with slight variation, that one may hear at Castle Garden three days in the week.

“That’s tew bad, I swan,” said the Yankee. “I kinder like the looks on her, and if you’re a mind ter, jest tell her, stranger, that I’ll take her home with me, and my old mother will kinder jack her up till she gits on her pins agin.”

The proposition was presented to the girl, but her recent experience rendered her loth to ac-

cept the offices of strangers, and she persistently declined the proffered succor.

"Well, darn my buttons," said the good-natured fellow, "I'm rale sorry for her. What in thunder'll a poor critter like her dew in a big town like this, without friends and no money? Let's see——" and he scratched his head and looked puzzled.

Meantime the clerk was urging her to either accept the Yankee's offer or go to the German Retreat, but she seemed not inclined to do either, and this was explained to those standing by.

"I hope the gal ain't afeard to trust me?" queried the New Englander.

"I presume she is," said the clerk. "Women are full of prejudices against men, the world over—their mothers teach them to be so pretty early in life—and she has been given away once since she landed, and she don't care for any *encores*."

This was a poser for the Yankee—too much logic for his simple mind, and he looked doleful enough. Presently, however, his face lighted up, and he blushed like a girl, as he said:

"Wall, naow, I don't calerlate as I'm a pertickelarly uncommon hansum chap, but, if you want ter, tell her I'll take her home to mother, up on Fifty-ninth Street, and see that she gits good fodder and tending, and—and——"

He stopped there and twirled his hat, which he had taken off, over and over, and looked at it bashfully. Then he abruptly added :

“And if the gal is afeared that I’m playing possum on her, I’ll marry her, by gum, and naow I *have* said it.”

After a few minutes the terms of this new proposal were communicated to Katrina, in her own tongue. At first she cried and hid her face, but as the interpreter continued and embellished the matter more or less, she let her apron drop and began to look timidly at the suitor for her hand. When the story was fully told, she accepted the offer with a great deal less hesitation than I had expected, and walked over to the side of the Puritan descendant. He took her by the hand, and observed to us, as they proposed to depart :

“Mother’s ben talkin’ marriage to me nigh on ten year, but I sez, sez I, you wimmin are sich infernal talkers, and I’ve kinder hild off. This one’s talk won’t worry me much, I calerlate, but what will mother say when I come a plowin’ in with her? Howsumever, I’ve allus told the old lady that when I move I fly, and b’gosh she’ll larn that lesson, when she sees us, I raelly do bleeve, though she never has yit. We’ll be married inside an hour—private-like—by Mayor Wickum. No keerds.”

Katrina had fallen to crying again as he was

delivering this speech, but he didn't notice it until he had finished. It was then that he drew her apron from her pretty face with a touch as soft and persuasive as a woman's, pushed her fair locks back gently, and said so tenderly that she knew instinctively the spirit, if not the substance of it:

"Poor, poor, pretty dear; we'll go home now, and I know mother'll set a heap by you."

And as the great steamers bore grandly past and went down the Narrows, and ferry-boats went dashing here and there in all directions, while stately ships spread their white wings and sailed away, and the sullen roar of business and bustle came borne upon the breeze—all unmindful of these or of the birds singing on the boughs above them, this queerly mated pair passed silently hand-in-hand through the Battery Park to the ceremony which should join their hopes and fortunes forevermore.





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